

Board of Health

Meeting No.	16	Contact	Candy Davidovits, Committee Administrator
Meeting Date	Thursday, July 3, 2008	Phone	416-392-8032
Start Time	1:00 PM	E-mail	boh@toronto.ca
Location	Committee Room 1, City Hall		

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HL16.2	Amended		
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Reducing Electromagnetic Field Exposure from Hydro Corridors

City Council Decision

City Council on July 15, 16 and 17, 2008, adopted the following motions:

1. City Council adopt the following policy of prudent avoidance to reduce childhood exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMF) in and adjacent to hydro corridors with transmission lines such that:
 - a. when the City plans new multi-use trails, garden allotment, recreational or parkland uses in or abutting a hydro corridor, the appropriate division undertake an EMF management plan and design the layout to minimize the increase in yearly average exposure to EMF for young children; and
 - b. when applications are received for official plan and zoning bylaw amendments or plan of subdivisions for residential, school or day nursery uses on property that abuts a hydro corridor, the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, request the applicant to undertake an EMF management plan which outlines low or no-cost measures to minimize the increase in yearly average exposure to EMF for young children and to provide a copy of the plan to the Medical Officer of Health.

2. City Council request Toronto Hydro and the Medical Officer of Health to continue to explore current and potential resources to reduce EMF emissions when new equipment used in the distribution of electricity is installed or existing equipment is modified.

3. City Council request the Provincial Minister of Energy to direct Hydro One to continue to incorporate practical low-cost measures to reduce EMF emissions, when new equipment used in the transmission of electricity is installed or existing equipment is modified.

4. When new high-voltage transmission lines or increases in the capacity of existing

transmission lines are proposed within the City of Toronto, the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, in consultation with the Medical Officer of Health, request the proponent to undertake a health impact assessment to evaluate options available to minimize any increase to the yearly average exposure to EMF in Toronto.

(June 18, 2008) Report from the Medical Officer of Health

Committee Recommendations

The Board of Health recommends that:

1. City Council adopt the following policy of prudent avoidance to reduce childhood exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMF) in and adjacent to hydro corridors with transmission lines such that:
 - a. when the City plans new multi-use trails, garden allotment, recreational or parkland uses in or abutting a hydro corridor, the appropriate division undertake an EMF management plan and design the layout to minimize the increase in yearly average exposure to EMF for young children; and
 - b. when applications are received for official plan and zoning bylaw amendments or plan of subdivisions for residential, school or day nursery uses on property that abuts a hydro corridor, the Chief Planner request the applicant to undertake an EMF management plan which outlines low or no-cost measures to minimize the increase in yearly average exposure to EMF for young children and to provide a copy of the plan to the Medical Officer of Health.
2. City Council request Toronto Hydro to report to the Board of Health on current and potential measures to reduce EMF emissions when new equipment used in the distribution of electricity is installed or existing equipment is modified.
3. City Council request the provincial Minister of Energy to direct Hydro One to continue to incorporate practical low-cost measures to reduce EMF emissions when new equipment used in the transmission of electricity is installed or existing equipment is modified.
4. When new high-voltage transmission lines or increases in the capacity of existing transmission lines are proposed within the City of Toronto, the Chief Planner, in consultation with the Medical Officer of Health, request the proponent to undertake a health impact assessment to evaluate options available to minimize any increase to the yearly average exposure to EMF in Toronto.

Committee Decision Advice and Other Information

The Board of Health requested the Medical Officer of Health to consult with Councillor Paula Fletcher on the need to measure the levels of magnetic fields on Commissioners Street from Logan Avenue to the Don Roadway and to provide the Board of Health with the results and interpretation of the findings.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications from the adoption of this report.

Summary

The use and transmission of electricity creates electromagnetic fields (EMF). Common sources in urban areas include electric appliances, building wiring, and electricity transmission lines. Background levels of EMF in urban areas are usually less than 1 milligauss (mG). However, overall levels of EMF in and right next to hydro corridors can be higher than those usually found both indoors and outdoors elsewhere in Toronto.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classifies the magnetic component of EMF as a possible carcinogen because of the association between exposures to EMF magnetic fields in the home and childhood leukemia. Given the possible link between the exposure to EMF and an increase in the risk of leukemia in children, taking practical low or no-cost actions to reduce exposures to young children is prudent.

This report proposes that the City continue with a policy of prudent avoidance and take simple steps that would minimise exposures to EMF from hydro corridors for young children. It recognizes that recreational, trail and park uses of hydro corridors have health benefits for children and adults who use them which outweigh any potential risk from EMF exposure.

The proposed policy would require City divisions to design new recreational, trail and park uses in hydro corridors so as to minimize childhood exposure to EMF. For new developments of residential, schools and day nursery uses next to a hydro corridor, the applicant would be requested to do an EMF management plan that includes low or no-cost solutions in the design and layout of the building and property to reduce childhood exposures to EMF. When new or upgraded transmission lines are proposed within Toronto, the City would request the proponent do a health impact assessment and an EMF management plan that outlines the measures that can be taken to minimize any increase in exposure to EMF in Toronto.

Background Information (Committee)

Reducing Electromagnetic Field Exposure from Hydro Corridors - Staff Report
(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-13980.pdf>)

Communications (Committee)

(June 30, 2008) letter from Blair Peberdy, Vice President, Marketing, Communications, Public Affairs and Chief Conservation Officer, Toronto Hydro, and Michelle Morrissey O'Ryan, Vice President, Health Safety and Environment, Hydro One Networks (HL.New.HL16.2.1)

Speakers (Committee)

Councillor Michael Del Grande, Ward 39, Scarborough-Agincourt

Submitted Thursday, July 3, 2008

Councillor John Fillion, Chair, Board of Health