



Likely To Widen Parkway Belt Here For Power Corridor

By HAL BLAINE
Modification of the province's proposed Parkway Belt here through Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan Towns can be expected if the Nanticoke to Pickering 500 kv hydro corridor is included within the Belt as recommended March 15 by the Solandt Commission. According to the Solandt Report the Belt in this area will likely have to be widened.

Only then should the necessary public hearings be held to definitely establish the Parkway, he says.

Solandt says the process for establishing both the belt and corridor must be speeded up as much as possible to avoid extra expense for electrical power users now facing huge increases in power bills.

The public inquiry commissioner says public demand for a novel type of different and improved appearance tower will add \$40,000,000 to the construction cost of the corridor, thus also adding to the province's power costs. But he bows to public demand and recommends Ontario Hydro use the more costly tower over most of the route.

NO GUYED TOWERS
Dr. Solandt notes just about everybody, including Ontario Hydro and concerned citizens groups, have almost entirely ignored another type of structure "guyed towers" which are the lightest of all types of towers. He says they are slender and unob-

trusive. "Good examples of 500 kilovolt guyed towers can be seen on Ontario Hydro's northern right-of-way coming down to the Kleinburg Station. Ontario Hydro didn't recommend guyed towers for the Middleport to Pickering transmission line. There was no evidence of public support for them and they were scarcely mentioned during the (Solandt) Commission hearings," he says.

Solandt notes that everybody stands to be paying five times as much for electricity at the end of the current 15-year period and worries about the additional costs due to construction delays and use of unnecessarily expensive towers. He levels serious criticism at provincial and federal governments in Canada, as well as other national governments, for failing to fund and promote innovative power utility developments that could head off the huge increase coming in electric power costs.

... according to Ontario Hydro's calculations the cost of the improved appearance structures will exceed the cost of standard lattice towers by more than \$40,000,000. By 1985 this would increase the cost of power throughout Ontario by approximately 0.15% and would add about 62 cents a year to the average residential power

bill, \$4.30 to the average commercial bill and \$36 to the average industrial bill. It is cold comfort to the consumer to note that the average industrial bill. It is cold comfort to the consumer to note that the average residential customer's bill, which was \$110.82 in 1971 is forecast to be \$554 in 1985," he says.

URGES GOVERNMENTS
Noting this comment is outside the public inquiry's immediate terms of reference, the former Canada Science Council chairman says, "I would strongly urge the federal and provincial governments, as part of their program to co-ordinate action on energy problems, to define Canada's goals for new technology needed both for the generation and transmission of power over the next 20 to 30 years and then immediately implement and adequately fund programs to ensure that these goals are achieved. It isn't necessary to all the research work in any one province or even in Canada.

"What is necessary is to ensure that all the major developments required are in hand somewhere and are being adequately funded and co-ordinated. Canada already has substantial resources on which to build in Ontario Hydro, Hydro-Quebec, the National Research Council and industry. With proper planning we can more than pull our weight in international efforts to devise better

energy supply and distribution systems.

NEED NEW METHODS
... there are many individuals who question the advisability of continuing to distribute energy in the form of electricity to individual homes and factories. There are strong arguments for having large central nuclear power plants producing either hydrogen or some simple hydro-carbon which would then be distributed by underground pipeline to individual load centres such as homes or factories.

"In the ideal system each home or factory would have its own fuel cell which would produce heat and electricity," says Solandt, advocating the development of alternatives to the kind of system which requires a swath of huge towers across the southern York Region landscape here. He goes on to describe how Canada is missing a big opportunity in the nuclear power development field.

Solandt says the Parkway Belt should be purchased by a single agency, not partly by Hydro and partly by some other provincial ministry.

"I also recommend that the government give urgent consideration to the possibility of nominating one ministry to acquire all land needed in the Parkway Belt, whether for Ontario Hydro and the Ministry of Transportation and Communication, or for other government land users. Such centralization should accelerate land acquisition, lessen the disruption to private owners whose land is being taken, and probably result in significant cost savings to the public at large. The advantages of having all the land owned by one ministry may also be considerable."

NO FINAL COSTS
Solandt says there is no way to come to a decisive conclusion in the circumstances on the relative costs of the various possible power corridor routes but he comes down hard in favor of using the Parkway Belt.

Obviously, since the (his) Commission has recommended the inclusion of the 500 kv line in the Parkway Belt, the Commission feels that if any extra expenditure is incurred, it will be amply justified by the social and environmental benefits that will be achieved," he says.

The commissioner finds no evidence the power lines need to have any more than a negligible effect on farming or recreational activities on the land over which they pass. He says Ontario Hydro should take more periodically renegotiable easement leases for land instead of taking land titles. He notes that under similar lines in Great Britain there is no fear of adverse effects, since 13,000 homes have been built under existing similar power lines.

Dr. Solandt says the power corridor will be a valuable community space.

"Since a great deal of the proposed right-of-way for this route, from the Milton Station to the Cherrywood Station, will be in the Parkway Belt, most of it should be available for other uses. Especially with selective cutting the right-of-way will be highly suitable for many recreational uses.

NEW ECOLOGICAL POLICY
"This (Ontario Hydro's) new policy on multiple use of rights-of-way will undoubtedly convince the pub-

lic that transmission lines don't have the same adverse effects as expressways and railways. Transmission lines neither pre-empt the total area, nor do they interfere with highway and pedestrian crossings in the same way. In fact, it will appear that the main disadvantages of a transmission line are visual," he says, listing Hydro's new Ecological Practices for Rights-Of-Way Policy adopted in 1971. It sets out procedures for planning, cutting, maintaining and restoring the natural growth along power lines.

Solandt deals with planning for a connecting power line from Parkway Station east of Thornhill to Newmarket as follows:

"I do urge Ontario Hydro to proceed as soon as possible with a more specific outline of the requirement for this route in order to have a right-of-way reserved before the area becomes even more built up. In accordance with the principle of joint use of linear rights-of-way, I would recommend this route should as far as possible be co-located with Highway 404 (not yet built).

TO VICTORIA SQUARE
The present proposed route for Highway 404 passes so close to the west of Buttonville Airport that it might not be possible to put the 500 kv transmission line in the same right-of-way at that point. It would, therefore, probably be necessary to use a route, such as the one outlined by Bhi (Limited), which goes to the east of Buttonville Airport until just south of Victoria Square. At this point the line will veer west to join Highway 404 and from there northward the transmission line should be located and designed in close co-operation with the designers of the highway and the intended Parkway Belt.

"The Commission was presented with conflicting advice concerning the exact location of the transmission line in relationship to Highway 404. Some would like to see the line east of the highway (in Markham Town) and some to the west (in Richmond Hill Town). The Commission

takes no sides in this argument but does urge the earliest possible resolution of the problem."

LANGSTAFF ROUTE
Solandt describes the recommended power corridor route from Woodbridge Station through Concord and Langstaff to Parkway (Thornhill) Station as follows:

"This link follows the Parkway Belt in its entirety. Care will be required in siting the corridor where it crosses the Humber River north of the Black Creek Pioneer Village, at the crossing of Yonge Street at Highway 7 and east of Bayview (Avenue) before linking to Parkway Station. The right-of-way will be 545 feet wide, to include two double circuit 500 kv lines and possibly two double circuit 230 kv lines."

Dr. Solandt notes that Bhi head Bruce Howlett said there is much in favor of the recommended route, whether or not there ever is or was a Parkway Belt designated. "Even if no Parkway Belt had been designated, he feels that it would be a readily defensible route for the line. The absence of conflicts, combined with the advantages of joint use of the Parkway Belt corridor, make an overwhelming case in favor of the "Parkway Route" for the transmission line."

NEWMARKET: This town should have an annual appreciation night, according to Councillor Tom Taylor. He suggests that one man and one woman a year should be honored for their volunteer work in the community.

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Sure you can sit back and gripe about things that should be done, but here's your chance to get those things done. The Social Planning Council can help you, but to help you it needs your help.

The council's annual meeting is being held Thursday, May 16th at 8:00 p.m. at Don Head Secondary School on Major Mackenzie Drive. If you write to the Council, declaring yourself a candidate and attend the annual meeting, you will be elected from the floor to represent your community either as a Director of the Board or as a Task Force Committee Member.

Social Planning Council of Richmond Hill & District
Nomination Committee
P.O. Box 524
Richmond Hill, Ontario

WRITE NOW AND ATTEND THE ANNUAL MEETING BUT ONLY IF YOU GIVE A DAMN!