

WHMPS and WHLUB Amendments Large-scale Wind Turbine Setbacks

Second Reading
September 26, 2024

something inspiring awaits



Background

- Application received in November 2023 from a Vaughan resident requesting amendments to Section 4.24 of the WHMPS to further evaluate wind farm development proposals within the Municipality
- Began a staff investigation and Council discussions on appropriate setbacks for large-scale wind turbines
- Following those discussions, Council approved a motion on February 27, 2024 to direct staff to *“follow the planning process to amend the planning documents to include a 4 km setback”*
- A Public Information Meeting was held on April 2, 2024, and staff drafted the proposed planning document amendments that would establish a minimum 4km setback requirement from large-scale wind turbines to dwelling units

Background Cont.

- On May 9, the PAC/HAC did not recommend in favour of the amendments to establish a 4 km setback
- The amendments were taken to Council for First Reading on May 28, 2024. After lengthy discussion, Council directed staff to *“...bring back a report to Council which identifies property lines as the designation for measurement from wind farms and that the distance be established at 2.5 km and with development agreement as part of the process.”*
- Council reviewed the proposed amendments to increase the required minimum setback for large-scale wind turbines to 2.5 km from abutting lots with frontage on a roadway and gave First Reading on June 25, 2024
- Council held a Public Hearing on July 23, 2024, and tabled Second Reading until the September Council meeting

Proposed WHMPS Amendments Cont.

4.24 Wind Turbines

Council wishes to encourage the use of technologies that reduce dependence on non-renewable resources and do not contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. Wind energy systems are a clean, renewable source of electric power. Residential-scale wind turbines will be permitted in most zones, subject to lot size, setback and height requirements.

Utility-scale wind turbines have a rated production capacity greater than 100 kW. Much larger than those used for residential energy generation, utility-scale turbines may have towers ranging from 165 to 430 feet (50 to 131 meters) in height, for a total turbine height of up to 709 feet (216 meters).

Proposed WHMPS Amendments Cont.

These large wind turbines may be used in wind farms, where a number of turbines feed electricity directly into the utility grid, or as stand-alone installations. ~~As Council wishes to facilitate the development of wind energy systems, the installation of exploration or test turbines will be treated as a temporary use and permitted as-of-right outside of the Growth Centres, Village and Hamlets subject to setbacks, minimum lot size standards, and requirements for removal within specified time limits. More~~

Proposed WHMPS Amendments Cont.

~~Due to controversy in the Municipality regarding siting of wind turbines~~ Due to the potential future development of land within WHRM and opportunities for landowners, permanent installations of large-scale wind turbines, including the establishment of wind farms, will be considered only by development agreement where the proposed wind turbine placement is setback 2.5 km from abutting lots with frontage on a roadway, unless written permission is given by the abutting property owner. Where these facilities have a production rating of two megawatts or more, they are also subject to the Nova Scotia Environmental Assessment Regulations as a Class I Undertaking. Most wind farms also require a federal Environmental Assessment under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA).

Proposed WHMPS Amendments Cont.

- Remove:
 - Policy 4.24.3 regarding the temporary establishment of large wind turbines for exploration or test purposes
- Amend:
 - Policy 4.24.4 to include the new requirement of a 2.5 km setback from abutting lots with frontage on a roadway within the development agreement policy criteria for permanent large-scale wind turbines or wind farms

Proposed WHMPS Amendments Cont.

Policy 4.24.4 It shall be the policy of Council to consider the development of permanent or long-term installations of large wind turbines or wind farms outside the Growth Centre, Village and Hamlet designations by development agreement, having regard to the following:

(a) any required provincial and/or federal government environmental assessment processes have been completed;

~~(b) adequate separation distances are maintained from adjacent land uses to minimize impacts of noise and shadow and to ensure public safety the proposed wind turbine placement is setback 2.5 km from abutting lots with frontage on a roadway, unless written permission is given by the abutting property owner;~~



Proposed WHLUB Amendments

- Remove:
 - Section 5.54 regarding the temporary establishment of large wind turbines for exploration or test purposes

Public Information Meeting – April 2, 2024

Staff Review

PAC/HAC Review and Recommendation –
May 9, 2024

Council Review – May 28, 2024

Council First Reading – June 25, 2024

Public Hearing – July 23, 2024

Second Reading – September 26, 2024

Ministerial Review/Approval

Notice Placed in Paper

Process

All statutory requirements have
been met



Recommendation

Staff do not recommend increasing the minimum setback for large-scale wind turbines to 2.5 km from abutting lots with frontage on a roadway, however, should Council wish to, the following motion would be in order:

...that Council gives Second Reading approves amending the text of the West Hants Municipal Planning Strategy and West Hants Land Use By-law to increase the required minimum setback for large-scale wind turbines to abutting lots with frontage on a roadway to 2.5 km in a manner substantively the same as Appendix A of the report #24-10 B to Council dated June 25, 2024.



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