



Report To:	Township of Southgate Council
Meeting Date:	2024-12-04
Report Number:	PL2024-101
Title:	Xplore Communications Tower Application (ON8409) File C27-24, Carolyn and Cleason Martin, 084231 Southgate Road 8, Concession 8, PT LOT 16
Open/Closed Session:	Open Session
Prepared By:	Victoria Mance, Junior Planner
Reviewed By:	Bill White, MCIP, RPP, Triton Engineering Senior Planning Consultant
Approved By:	Kenneth Melanson, MCIP, RPP Senior Manager of Development & Community Services
Approved By:	Dina Lundy, Chief Administrative Officer

Executive Summary:

A new 45 metre high freestanding communications tower is on-site to replace existing equipment on the farm silo. The proposed location described in the [FBO Connect Justification Report](#) was chosen to “maintain line of sight connections” with other facilities accommodate new and future technology. The proponent’s assessment confirms there are no existing facilities within 500 metres of the proposed site.

The proposal does not meet Southgate’s [Tower & Antenna Policy & Guidance Document](#) site location criteria recommending a 55 metre setback from all property lines. [Township Public Works](#) does not support the location because +/-20 to 30 metre setback is too close to Southgate Road 8. One [letter of opposition](#) was received at the public meeting. Council may advise that the setback does not meet Township policy, but Industry Canada is the approval authority.

Recommendation:

Be it resolved that Staff Report PL2024-101 regarding proposed Xplore Communications Tower Application (ON8409) File C27-24 for 084231 Southgate Road 8 be received for information; and **That** the proponent and Industry Canada be advised that the municipal land use consultation process has been completed according to the Township’s Telecommunication Facility Policy; and **That** the proponent and Industry Canada be advised the proposed tower does not provide a 55 metre setback from side and front lot lines (Southgate Road 8) recommended by Township Policy. **That** the proponent’s November 9, 2024, setback exemption request is received; and **That** should Industry Canada approve the proposed telecommunications tower that upon receipt of a letter of undertaking from the proponent permitting the Township to install radio communication equipment on the proposed facility if needed, that Council’s resolution will be forwarded advising the proponent and Industry Canada that the Township policy requiring public consultation has been completed and that installation shall meet all other policy requirements such as buffering/screening and obtaining an entrance permit and 911 emergency number if needed.

Reasons for Recommendation:

That the proponent and Industry Canada be advised that Council does not support the proposed telecommunications tower location for the following reasons:

- The facility does not meet the required setback of one times the tower height plus 10 metres (55 metres) in the [Southgate Communication Tower & Antenna Policy & Guidance Document](#); and
- Township Public Works advises the setback to Southgate Road 8 is under 55 metres and is not sufficient.

Proposal:

This proposed freestanding tower will provide Xplore Inc. customers with improved internet coverage and data services. The tower will be 45 metres high and occupy approximately nine (9) square metres in area. The tower will include an anti-climb mechanism and is located approximately 150 metres from the closest residence. Transmitting antenna equipment is mounted to the upper portion of the structure to maintain line of site with other communication facilities. According to the [FBO Connect Justification Report](#), the design provides for future technology and co-location of other facilities. Xplore's equipment on the existing silo can no longer accommodate additional technologies and will be decommissioned upon the completion of the proposed tower.

Background/Site Context:

The subject lands are an active farm with +-320 metres on Southgate Road 08, +-998 metres depth, 39-hectares of area and are located at the northeast corner of Southgate Road 08 and Southgate Sideroad 55. There is one farm property southwest of the subject lands. Photos along Southgate Road 8 from the proponent's submission are shown in **Attachment 1**. The farm cluster includes a single-detached dwelling, barn, multiple silos, and accessory structures on-site (see **Attachment 2**).

Application Review - Planning Act – Provincial Interest:

Section 2 of the [Planning Act RSO 1990 c.P. 13](#) supports the adequate provision and efficient use of communication, transportation, and other systems.

Application Review - Provincial Policy Statement (PPS 2024):

Section 3.1 (1) of [Provincial Planning Statement 2024](#) states that infrastructure, such as telecommunications, shall be provided in an efficient manner to accommodate projected need. [Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas](#) stating that renewable energy projects are exempt from municipal approvals have been changed by the Provincial Government. Federal telecommunications towers are also exempt from local approvals

Application Review - County of Grey Official Plan:

Schedule A Map 2 in the Grey County Official Plan designates the applicant's lands Agricultural and Hazard Lands. Section 8.9.4(1) states,

The County supports the provision of high quality telecommunication services through the entire County including broadband/fibre and cellular services both within settlement areas and rural areas.

Section 8.9.4(5) states Telecommunication towers are exempt from municipal zoning by-laws and Section 41 of the Planning Act. A minimum 250 metre setback from all residential zones and dwellings is recommended wherever possible, unless necessary to provide adequate service to

such areas. County Planning Staff recommend the proposed tower be relocated 250 metres from the nearest dwelling not owned by the property owner, if possible.

Application Review - Southgate Township Official Plan:

The site is designated Agriculture and Hazard Lands in [Schedule A Map 1](#) in the [Township Official Plan](#). The Official Plan recognizes the importance of utilities, like telecommunication facilities, and permits them in all designations. Section 6.9(9) requires utilities avoid Natural Heritage Systems, especially Core Areas. This site is not located within any identified Natural Heritage Systems or Core Areas in [Schedule D](#) of the Official Plan.

Application Review - Southgate Zoning By-law:

In the [Township Zoning By-law](#), telecommunication antennae are exempt from height restrictions in Section 5.3, and are permitted in all zones by Section 5.19 (c)

Application Circulation and Public Comments:

The following comments were received:

Comments from:	Comments received:
Grey County (November 14, 2024)	County Planning Staff recommend that the proposed tower be relocated 250 metres from the nearest dwelling not owned by the property owner, if possible.
Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority (October 10, 2024)	Proposed tower not located within SVCA Approximate Screen Area, no concerns.
Township Public Works Department (October 31, 2024)	This application indicates the proposed tower to be erected in close proximity to Southgate Road 08 Right of Way and does not meet Section 3 of Bylaw 2021-123 policy and is not supported by Public Works as proposed.
General Public Comments - James Bell (November 14, 2024)	Expressed concern for the setbacks of the proposed tower from the road allowance and the applicant’s dwelling on the subject lands. Is not in support of the application and believes it should be relocated.
Bell Canada, Enbridge Gas, Township Fire Department, and Historic Saugeen Metis	No comments received as of report writing.

Conclusion:

1. Telecommunication tower proposals are subject to [Southgate Communication Tower & Antenna Policy & Guidance Document](#)
2. The policy provides a consistent process to follow when reviewing telecommunication facility proposals as Industry Canada is the approval authority for these installations.
3. The submission followed the policy including a consultation meeting with Staff, documentation for review, and a public meeting held November 27.
4. Documentation submitted included an [Information Package](#) and a [Planning Justification Report](#).
5. The proponent was advised of the 55 metre setback recommended by Township Policy and the Public Works comments, resulted in a written exemption request in Attachment 3. Alternative locations were considered but did not work on-site due to proximity to the septic field, future development, and active agricultural areas.

6. The proposal otherwise complies with the Township policy, in the follow ways:
- Distances from residential, schools and active parks appear to be maximized.
 - No natural features or environmentally sensitive features are likely impacted.
 - No cultural heritage features were identified nearby.
 - Public views and vistas are not obscured, and tower is compatible with adjacent uses.
 - The tower location is 150m from the closest residential property; and
 - Co-location with other suppliers can be provided under Township Policy.

Council can advise the proponent and Industry Canada the location does not meet Township policy. Industry Canada may approve the proposed location at its discretion.

Link to Township of Southgate Strategic Plan:

The proposal has links to the Township [Community Strategic Plan](#) as follows:

- 1.C Ensure the distribution of technology and services to local businesses by referring them to correct supports
- 11.D Modernize administration of services through optimization of technology to meet or exceed industry best practices.

Attachment(s):

Attachment 1 – Before and After Photo from Southgate Road 8

Attachment 2 – Air Photo

Attachment 3 – Proponents Exemption Request

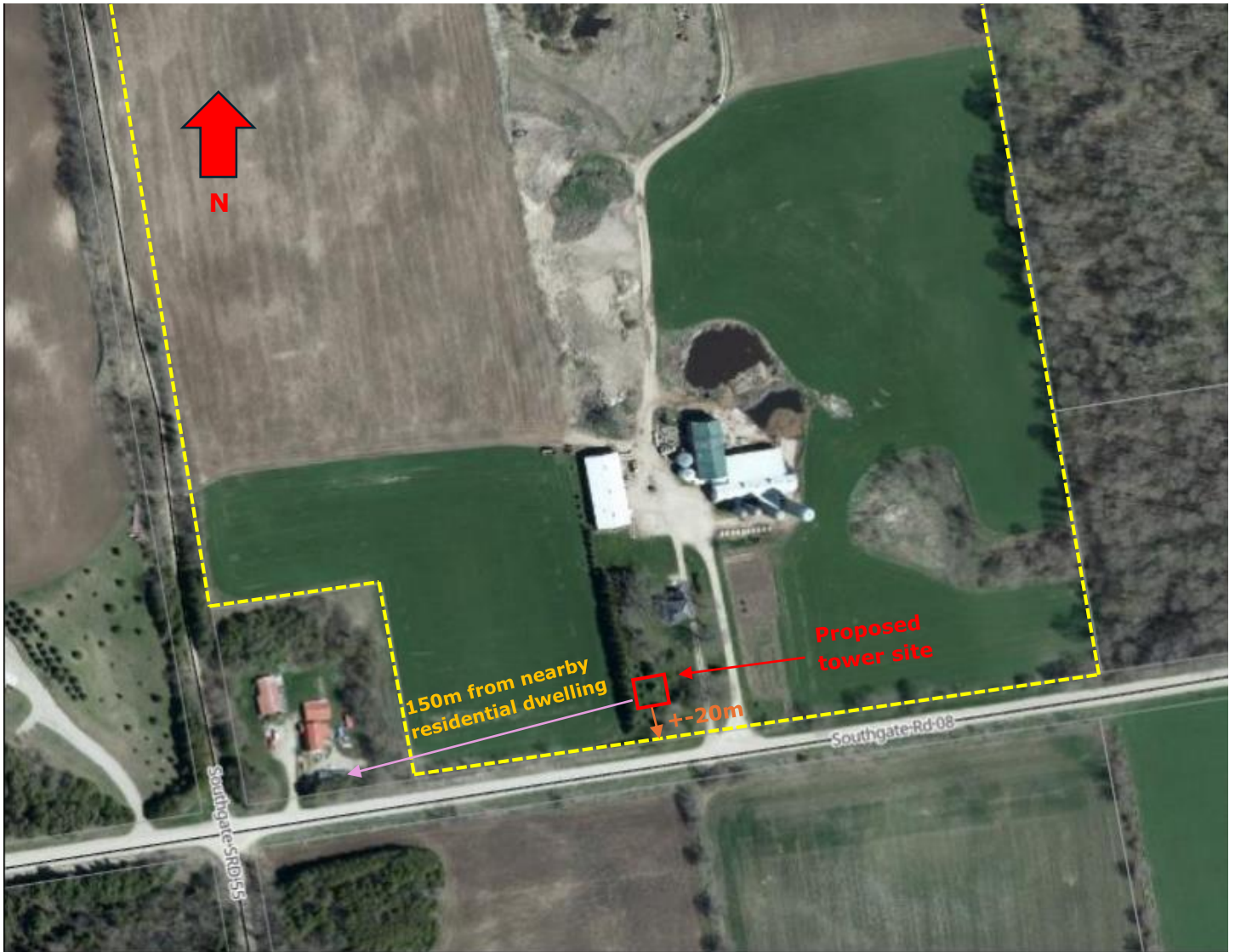
Attachment 1 – Site Photo from Southgate Road 8 - Before



After



Attachment 2 – Air Photo



Attachment 3 – Proponents Exemption Request November 8, 2024

Hi Victoria,
Thanks for the comments.

We noted in the justification report as to why we could not move further into the property.
“Although the Township’s Policy’s recommends a setback from property lines, it was not possible at this location. In working with the landowner, a few locations near their buildings were ruled out (septic field & future development) and we did not want to interfere with active agricultural areas”.

As noted in the policy, it is a recommendation and in this case it was not possible.

If public works is only in disagreement because of the policy, then we would ask that the exemption be made as there is no structural or engineering requirement that a tower needs to be set back from a property line. In urban areas, we build the towers adjacent to property lines as setbacks would rule out many potential locations.

Thank you,
Sarah

Sarah Duncan
Government Relations