



Meeting Summary

Regional Planning Process Advisory Group

Meeting Date: December 3, 2015 **Time:** 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Location: 2300 Yonge Street, 25th Floor, ADR Room

Attendees:

RPPAG Members: Irv Klajman (Powerstream) (Chair), Iain Angus (City of Thunder Bay), Jake Brooks (APPrO), Bob Chow (IESO), Edith Chin (Enbridge), Bing Young (Hydro One)

OEB Staff: Chris Cincar, Emay Cowx (Consultant), Azalyn Manzano

Meeting Agenda:

1. Review of Last Meeting Notes
2. Meeting Items
 - a) Hydro One Local Planning Document
 - b) Needs Assessment and Scoping Assessment Reports
 - c) Develop Survey Tool to Measure Effectiveness of Regional Planning Process
3. Other Business
4. Next Meeting

1. Review of Last Meeting Minutes

The group reviewed the previous Meeting Summary notes (September 15, 2015).

RPPAG Members approved the final document for posting on the OEB website without changes.

2. Meeting Items

a) Hydro One Local Planning Document

The group discussed the criteria used by the study team to determine if either Local Planning or Regional Planning should be used and whether or not the Planning Process Working Group (PPWG) Report should be revised to incorporate and “formalize” the criteria agreed upon by the RPPAG.

OEB staff noted that they had anticipated that more work would be considered Regional Planning rather than Local Planning, but actual results appear to be the reverse. This has indicated that certain criteria or tests may be required in the Needs Assessment phase, in order to ensure consistency in determining whether Local Planning is appropriate.

It was suggested that Needs Assessment is the time to identify whether issues need to be addressed, rather than pre-judging that wires investments are the only solution. Anything that is complicated, and has material impact upstream, at minimum, should go to a Scoping Assessment. If the outcome of the Scoping Assessment is that it should go into Local Planning, then at least it was posted for feedback before a decision was made on what type of planning should be used.

It was identified that all of the other steps in the Regional Planning Process have some level of transparency outside of the study team and few are aware of the report issued at the Needs Assessment stage. With a Scoping Assessment, a draft document is issued to stakeholders for comment before a decision is made regarding whether to proceed with Local Planning or Regional Planning.

Hydro One explained that it was fundamentally the decision of the study team whether or not a Scoping Assessment was needed. Making the decision based on a Needs Assessment ensures that small things don't need to wait to go through the 90 day Scoping Assessment process, and takes into account that issues are dealt with in bunches rather than all at once.

Revising the Hydro One Local Planning Document

It was noted that the current document prepared by Hydro One on Local Planning appears to be more prescriptive than the actual process.

It was suggested that rather than having hard tests, it would be better to have a list of questions to check off, with underlying principles and guidelines. Where there is a rate case, the OEB will have some assurance that the necessary considerations have been looked into.

Some of the suggested test questions included the following:

- Does it have an impact on upstream capacity?
- Have other ways of dealing with the need been attempted before building infrastructure (e.g. a new station)?
- Is this the most cost-effective way to meet this need?
- What is the size of the need?
- Was the decision made by going through how to address the need systematically and was their consensus amongst the team?

Action Item:

- **Hydro One will revise the document to include details discussed in the meeting, which more accurately depict the current process. The document will be circulated among group members for discussion at the next meeting.**

Revising the PPWG Report to “Formalize” the Criteria

It was suggested that a Local Planning appendix be added to the PPWG Report to ensure that best practices get passed on as the members of the RPPAG change over time and also ensure decisions to go with Local Planning from the Needs Assessment stage are made on the same basis across all regions.

The process for revising the report was discussed. OEB staff clarified that, if there was a major change to the PPWG Report, it would likely have to come in the form of a recommendation from the RPPAG to the Board, especially if it affected any OEB regulatory instruments.

There was some discussion about the ownership of the PPWG Report. OEB staff noted that the RPPAG owned the Report -- not the OEB.

The RPPAG’s Terms of Reference (ToR) was also discussed; specifically related to its focus mainly on the Regional Infrastructure Planning (RIP) process. Discussions have arisen in the last few meetings that the RPPAG should perhaps recommend to the Board that the ToR be revised to broaden the group’s mandate to be able to look at all four stages of the Regional Planning process, including the Integrated Regional Resource Planning (IRRP) process.

It was also noted that the best advice related to process changes would come from being able to look at the planning process in a holistic manner.

It was also suggested that Bing Young raise the issue of broadening scope of the RPPAG at the next Industry Affairs Standing Committee (IASC) meeting.

As part of the process to revise the ToR, the RPPAG members discussed whether or not there should be rules of procedure (e.g., voting, consensus decision-making, etc.).

Action Item:

- **OEB staff to provide clarification regarding the process to revise the RPPAG's ToR.**
- **IESO staff to prepare a draft letter to the OEB related to a proposal to revise the ToR for the RPPAG to broaden the group's mandate to include the IRRP process and circulate to RPPAG members, for discussion at the next meeting.**

b) Needs Assessment and Scoping Assessment Reports

There was general consensus that the reports were readable, not too technical, provided the rationale for the decision, had the right amount of information and explained the process well.

The audience for the report was also discussed. The group believes the reports have been written at a level that is appropriate for professionally involved individuals (e.g., municipal planners). It was noted business owners with significant load profiles may also have some interest in the report, as well as community newspapers.

It was also noted that some stakeholders have complained that the time allotted to submit feedback on the Scoping Assessment report was too short (i.e., 10 working days). Suggestions for improving feedback included:

- more “forewarning” for stakeholders;
- direct contact with those who need to know;
- demonstrating that there has been a lot of effort to put the information out there (e.g. tweets), in the interests of transparency;
- the ability to subscribe to a notifications list;
- “pushing” to let people know that they can sign up for notifications.

A question also arose as to who should be responsible for making sure that stakeholders are informed about the release of the reports. For the Needs Assessment reports, Hydro One noted they could send out the communications after receiving lists from the study team identifying which stakeholders need to be informed. Hydro One also suggested that this communication should have a note included stating that, if stakeholders have questions, they should speak with the relevant study team participants (e.g., their local LDC) – not only them.

A suggestion was made to include the names of the Local Advisory Committee (LAC) members in the Scoping Assessment reports. However, IESO reported that not every municipality involved in Regional Planning wants to have a LAC formed and a LAC was not a requirement.

c) Develop Survey Tool to Measure Effectiveness of Regional Planning Process

Two draft surveys were presented for discussion. The purpose of the surveys is to acquire feedback from individuals participating in each of the Needs and Scoping Assessment stages of the regional planning process. When analyzed, survey results will help to provide a measure of process efficacy and identify possible areas for process improvement.

The group engaged in a question by question review and discussion of each of the draft surveys, beginning with inconsistency in the use of terms used to describe the Regional Planning Process: the PPWG used the word “Screening” while the Codes used “Assessment”. The recommendation was to use “Assessment” consistently for both stages of work to be consistent with the terminology used in the OEB’s regulatory instruments.

The ensuing discussion resulted in a clearer definition of the audiences for each survey, fine tuning of some questions, removal of others, and the addition of new ones.

There was a suggestion to add a question with a comment box to ask external stakeholders if there was enough information in the reports to provide informed feedback.

A question was raised about whether or not there should be two surveys -- one for those participating in the process, and another for those looking at the report that did not participate. It was noted that those “outside” the process don’t necessarily know that there are other stages.

A group member suggested picking individuals from different parts of the province to “beta test” the surveys.

Action Item:

- **OEB Consultant will refine each of the Needs Assessment and Scoping Assessment surveys based on feedback provided.**
- **Refined draft surveys will be circulated to Advisory Group members for re-consideration at the next RPPAG meeting.**

3. Other Business

A request was made to invite Peter Fraser (executive management sponsor of the RPPAG) to a future meeting.

4. Next Meeting

The next RPPAG meeting will be on February 10, 2016.