



## TOWNSHIP OF EDWARDSBURGH CARDINAL DISCUSSION ITEM

**Committee:** Committee of the Whole Administration & Operations

**Date:** November 13, 2023

**Department:** Administration

**Topic:** NGEP Discussion Paper

**Background:** In September, staff provided a discussion paper for consultation titled the Future of Natural Gas Expansion and Home Heating Affordability posted by the Ministry of Energy. The consultation period is open until December 15, 2023 and the Ministry is seeking feedback to specific questions under any of the following themes:

Theme #1: Performance of NGEP to Date

Theme #2: Conversion to Natural Gas for Home Heating

Theme #3: Natural Gas Expansion and Indigenous Communities

Theme #4: Future of Natural Gas Expansion

Staff have provided draft comments below under theme 4 to initiate committee discussion and receive further feedback.

### **Theme 4**

**What applications (such as residential, industrial, commercial, or agricultural) should natural gas expansion focus on in the future?** We are hearing from all sectors on the need for extension and expansion of Natural Gas infrastructure in our Township. This is needed to support and sustain our industrial parks and provide the opportunity for lower energy costs for the thousands of families, businesses and farmers. The returns include increased economic development and job creation opportunities for our communities.

**Where do you think further public investment in natural gas infrastructure makes sense and why?** Eastern Ontario, as noted in the discussion paper, this area had the highest home energy costs in Ontario. If 81% of Ontario uses natural gas as a heating source and eastern Ontario has the highest home energy costs, it is reasonable to conclude that eastern Ontario is in greater need for natural gas expansion.

**Alternatively, what other energy technologies could be considered instead of natural gas expansion?** Air and ground source heat pumps may be an alternative. These require electricity to operate and with the pending retirement of the Pickering

Nuclear Power Plant and shift to electric vehicles, would this create peak demand issues and less reliability.

**What other alternative government initiatives do you think could be in place to support cost-effective home heating in Ontario?** If there is an inability to expand and extend natural gas infrastructure to make this energy source available in a timely horizon consideration should be given to subsidizing other sources to balance out home heating costs and make housing costs more affordable and attainable.

**Do you think the government should have a larger role in identifying potential natural gas expansion projects to receive public funding, based on advice from the OEB and the project proponents?** Yes, in addition there should be a requirement for the provider to submit an annual report to municipalities on the current available capacity in the region. When developers come along or businesses look to expand, not having current relevant information to provide in a timely fashion places municipalities at a disadvantage to attracting business and development.

**How does natural gas expansion fit with provincial, municipal, or community-level sustainability objectives as well as ongoing electrification trends? What are the potential risks and benefits?** Natural gas expansion assists sustainability and benefits in growth, retention, affordable and attainable housing, and job creation. Potential risks include the inability of the electrical grid to support the added demands.



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