



Subject: *Mount Uniacke Quarry Expansion - Environmental Assessment Comments*
To: CAO for Planning Advisory Committee, September 19, 2023
Date Prepared: September 13, 2023
Related Motions: None
Prepared by: Debbie Uloth, Project Planner
Approved by: John Woodford, Director of Planning and Development

Summary

Planning staff have prepared draft comments for the Environmental Assessment of the Mount Uniacke Quarry Expansion for PAC's review. East Hants has until September 28, 2023, to submit written comments pertaining to the Environmental Assessment to Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change will decide if the project can be granted conditional Environmental Assessment Approval on or before October 18, 2023.

Financial Impact Statement

There is no financial impact associated with the adoption of this report.

Recommendation

Review the draft letter pertaining to the EA and direct staff to submit the comments to Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change.

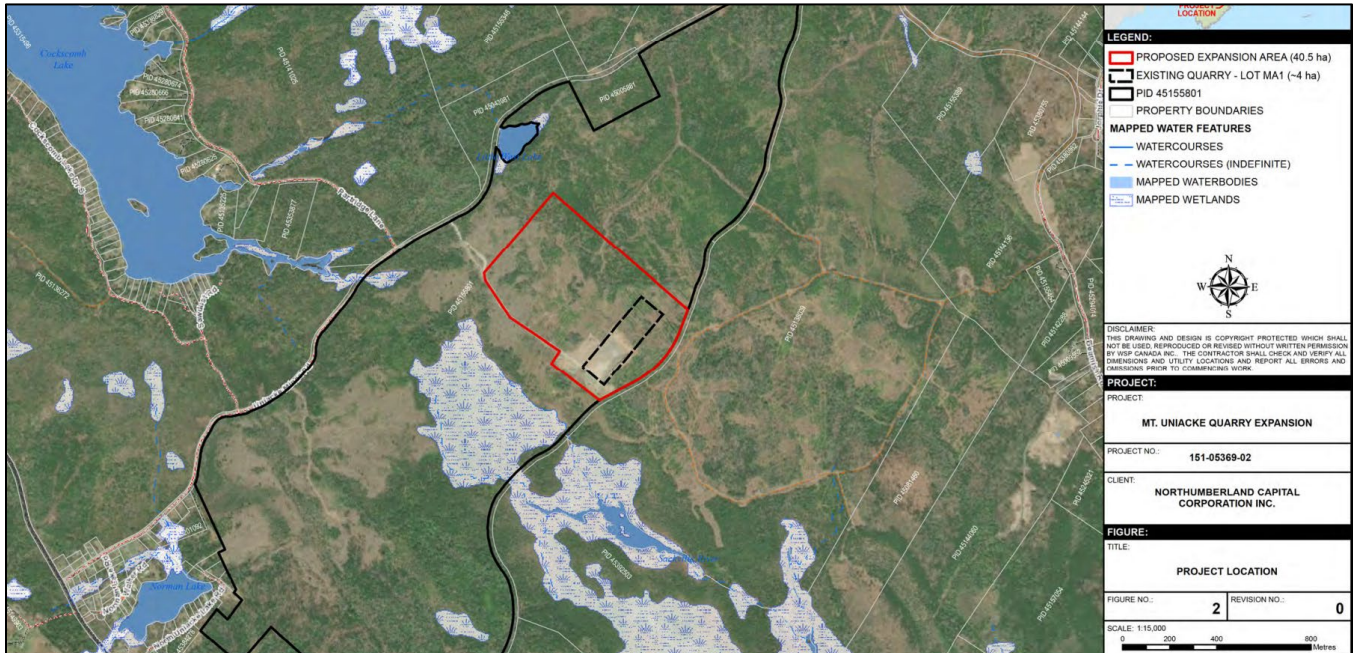
Recommended Motion

Planning Advisory Committee recommends that Council:

- *Direct staff to submit the draft letter regarding the Mount Uniacke Quarry Expansion Environmental Assessment to Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change.*

Background

The Mount Uniacke Quarry is requesting an expansion of their operations from 4 hectares to 40 hectares to allow for the continued production and stockpiling of aggregate used in a wide variety of local construction and infrastructure projects. The project's lifespan will be an estimated 30 to 50 years with continued production of an average of 30,000-50,000 tonnes of aggregate annually; based on current market demands. Access to the quarry is located off Uniacke Mines Road, approximately 2.3 km northeast of the intersection of Trunk 1 and Uniacke Mines Road. A map showing the location of the quarry is located below. The expansion of the quarry will take place on land that is owned by the quarry operator, Northumberland Capital Corporation Inc. (NCCI). Currently, no residential structures are located within 1.7 km of the existing quarry face and the closest residential structure to the perimeter of the subject property is 1.16 km.



A letter to Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change has been prepared. The content of the letter includes the following points.

TRAFFIC

Increased truck traffic is a concern that has been identified by residents of Mount Uniacke. East Hants Council shares their concerns about the impact that truck traffic may have on a growing community. Although development is not currently proposed for the Uniacke Mines Road area, staff have been in discussions with property owners with frontage on both Uniacke Mines Road and Old Mines Road regarding extensive future development.

Between the 2016 and the 2021 Census period the Mount Uniacke and surrounding communities experienced a 5.3% growth rate. This trend is expected to continue as the Municipality has had significant development interest in the area. Increased residential growth will increase traffic moving throughout the community, which has the potential to conflict with truck traffic. In order to address future growth in the area, East Hants will be undertaking a secondary planning strategy to help direct future growth.

East Hants has received some complaints about the existing Mount Uniacke Quarry typically related to the speed of trucks leaving the quarry. Safe driving practices should be discussed with truck drivers and the company should be held responsible for ensuring that haulers treat our roads and communities with respect.

SURFACE WATER

East Hants acknowledges that under the Industrial Approval monitoring is required to ensure that water exiting the quarry settling pond meets the specified water quality parameter; however, as the size of the quarry increases and more extreme weather events take place, East Hants has concerns with the accuracy and timeliness of the testing. Are there plans in place to address extreme rainfall events? Are the settling ponds designed for a 1 in 100 year rainfall event? How did the settling ponds fair during this summer's rain events and has an inspection of the settling ponds taken place to ensure there is no damage? Will the size or number of settling ponds increase with the expansion of the quarry? Contamination of the headwaters of the Sackville River is a concern for Council, as over 300 acres of the headwaters are owned by East Hants.

NOISE

With increasing development in the Mount Uniacke area and an increase in the quarry size, staff expect that there may be increased noise-related complaints concerning future blasting. Council understands that blasting has to take place at the quarry site but would encourage the Mount Uniacke Quarry to continue to be mindful of when the blasting takes place and the impact that it may have on residents in the area.

LAND USE BYLAW REGULATIONS

Although pits and quarries are regulated by the Provincial Government, any structures associated with the expansion of the Mount Uniacke Quarry are required to be compliant with the East Hants Land Use Bylaw and the National Building Code. The Mount Uniacke Quarry land (PID 45409950) is zoned Rural Use (RU) Zone, which requires that any structure closer than 1 km from the nearest non-resource related structure require a Development Agreement and that any structure farther than 1 km from the nearest non-resource related structure only requires a development/building permit. The proponent should contact the Municipality prior to the siting of any structure to determine the applicable regulations.

Alternatives

Direct staff to amend the draft letter or to add additional comments.

Attachments

Link to the EA Documents: [Mount Uniacke Quarry Expansion | Environmental Assessment | Nova Scotia Environment](#)
Draft Letter to Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change