

VALUATION CASE STUDY JOINING FORCES

The Challenge

Nova Scotia Power Incorporated (NSPI), the province's privately owned electrical utility wanted to strengthen its links to the wider North American grid by constructing a 345 KV transmission line from Onslow, Nova Scotia to the New Brunswick border. NSPI issued an RFP to value and negotiate the acquisition of the properties along the 96 kilometre route of the proposed transmission line. Turner Drake were the successful respondents.

Turner Drake's Approach

The project included 196 parcels in 140 ownerships. The properties included single family homes (to be reallocated or removed), active agricultural land (cash crops and pasture), passive agricultural land and woodland. Our objective: to obtaining negotiated settlements with every property owner without recourse to, or the threat of, expropriation. We frequently represent owners whose property has been expropriated so we understood their anxiety and frustration and were determined to eliminate it with this project. We therefore implemented a very open and transparent process. Instead of just relying on the site surveys, we harnessed the expertise of our in-house Geographic Information Systems (GIS) team to produce acquisition plans based on high resolution aerial photographs so that each owner could clearly determine how their property was impacted. We reviewed the base line appraisals already commissioned by NSPI to confirm their validity or advise amendments where necessary. We researched the contact information for each owner and prepared information packages and distributed them. We also prepared a suite of letters and documents to be deployed at each stage of the negotiation process. We followed up with each property owner to confirm ownership records, land use/cover types and boundary disputes. We met with each property owner on site to explain the compensation calculations, answer questions, alleviate concerns and respond with additional information. Where necessary we commissioned timber cruises from an independent forestry consultant. We liaised with NSPI's survey and legal teams on an on-going basis. Communication with our client was key: we hosted weekly meetings, prepared monthly progress reports and identified difficult negotiations for review and discussion. As we secured agreements with the property owners we prepared the formal documentation, obtained signatures and delivered the final agreements to NSPI for property transfer and payment of compensation.

Winning Results

The project was completed on time and within budget. Negotiated Settlements were reached with all but a few owners within the time frame of the contract.

