

DA2013-220

September 20, 2013

AltaGas Utilities Inc.
5509 – 45th Street
Leduc, Alberta T9E 6T6

Attention: Bill Toohey, P. Eng.
Engineer, System Planning and Design

**Change of Construction Methods
Permit and Licence No. 613
Application No. 1609930
Proceeding ID No. 2837**

Minor pipeline project application

AltaGas Utilities Inc. (AltaGas), by Application No. 1609930, registered on September 17, 2013, filed an application with the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC or the Commission) under Section 11 of the *Pipeline Act* and Section 4.1 of the *Gas Utilities Act* regarding the construction of a pipeline (Line 32 of Licence No. 613 – 1.10 kilometres of 114.3 millimetre outside diameter pipeline) in Township 29, Range 20, west of the Fourth Meridian. AltaGas requested approval to use open cutting as opposed to directional drilling. Installation of the pipeline was approved in Decision [2013-201](#),¹ issued on July 3, 2013.

The approval was granted with the understanding that of the 1.10 kilometres of pipeline, only 205 metres would be installed using open trenching techniques. The remaining 895 metres would be installed using directional drilling techniques. Directional drilling techniques would minimize the impact to the environment and maintain the pipeline's depth of cover. However, the directional drilling operation is experiencing difficulty in certain areas due to boulders getting in the way and deflecting the drilling assembly. Because this pipeline is to be replaced in the existing right-of-way, there is little room for these deflections. AltaGas proposed to open trench these sections to ensure the pipeline is installed in the right-of-way.

AltaGas stated that the open trench portions, like the bell holes used for directional drilling, would follow industry standard soil management practices to mitigate impacts on the environment. For the open trench portions, topsoil over the trench line would be stripped. All soils would be separated into topsoil and subsoil, and stored within the proposed right-of-way. Topsoil would be stored on one side of the trench while the subsoil would be stored on the opposite side. The bell holes would be dug in a similar fashion in that the topsoil and the subsoil would be stored to prevent co-mingling of the soils. Finally, in the backfill phase, the stored topsoil and subsoil would be returned to their original layers, and compacted and seeded or sodded, if necessary. Also, in areas that may be susceptible to erosion from spring run-off

¹ Decision 2013-201: AltaGas Utilities Inc. – Addition of New Pipeline for Replacement of Corroded Pipeline in Drumheller Area, Township 29, Range 20, west of the Fourth Meridian, Application No. 1609568, Proceeding ID No. 2587, July 3, 2013.

waters, ditch plugs and riprap would be installed. The ditch plugs would divert the run-off waters away from the disturbed area so as to prevent erosion of the ground cover over the pipeline and the riprap would prevent the surface soil from being washed away in these areas.

AltaGas stated that a portion of this pipeline is in the rural area, outside the town of Drumheller, and requires *Historical Resources Act* clearance. Alberta Culture approved this change in installation technique from drilling to trenching as long as all trenching activities are monitored in areas of high paleontological potential. AltaGas committed to having a paleontologist on-site for the digging of the bell holes and to also retain his services for the trenched portions.

AltaGas stated that the landowner was contacted. The change in installation method was discussed with him and he had no concerns with open trenching on his land.

AltaGas provided information respecting the need, nature and extent of the project. Since the project involves no significant ground disturbance, the resultant environmental impact of the work has been assessed with no significant impact identified. The landowner of the affected lands did not object to the project.

Based upon the information provided, AltaGas has demonstrated that the proposal is of a minor nature, no person other than the landowner of the land upon which the project takes place will likely be directly affected by the proposal, and no significant adverse environmental impact will be caused by the proposed project.

The Commission approves the application.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J W Vienneau". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Wade Vienneau
Executive Director, Facilities Division
On behalf of the Alberta Utilities Commission