

The Township of The Archipelago

Information Report to Council

Report No.: Connectivity

Date: April 18, 2024

Originator: Joe Villeneuve, Manager of Corporate Services
Glen Barnden, Connectivity Advisor

Subject: Connectivity – Activity Report

BACKGROUND

Ongoing activities related to the ***Province's Accelerated High Speed Internet Program (AHSIP)*** for application-based Designated Broadband Projects which will support the government's commitment of providing access to high-speed internet to every region of Ontario by the end of 2025.

Designated Broadband Projects have been created with the goal for everyone in Ontario to have access to reliable highspeed internet connections at home, work, and in our communities. Supported by legislative and regulatory changes and backed by a nearly \$4 billion investment, the projects seek to solve the challenge of inadequate access to broadband by working closely with stakeholders and making legislative and regulatory changes to ensure that broadband connectivity can be achieved. This is an exciting step forward to support the objective of expanding the reach, quality, and connectivity of high-speed internet to all Ontarians.

Infrastructure Ontario (IO) is working closely with the Ministry of Infrastructure to support delivery of the projects and working with stakeholders to accelerate broadband infrastructure deployment. Partners involved in application-based designated broadband projects are being coordinated through IO's Technical Assistance Team to work together to enable connectivity in an expedient way.

Program progress in the Township of The Archipelago

April 2024 – Various contractors involved in planning and design have been observed on many township roads assessing existing infrastructure (road shoulders, hydro poles, township easements and waterways) to use in extending **new fiber optic infrastructure** to properties throughout the township.

Bell is the internet service provider that has signed agreements with the Ontario Provincial Government to complete the build of new infrastructure in the Township of The Archipelago. Bell's subcontractors – *Pickard Construction, UTS, GTel, Mike's Communication, VistaCare Communications* - are some of the names our residents might observe fulfilling aspects of work associated with this project.



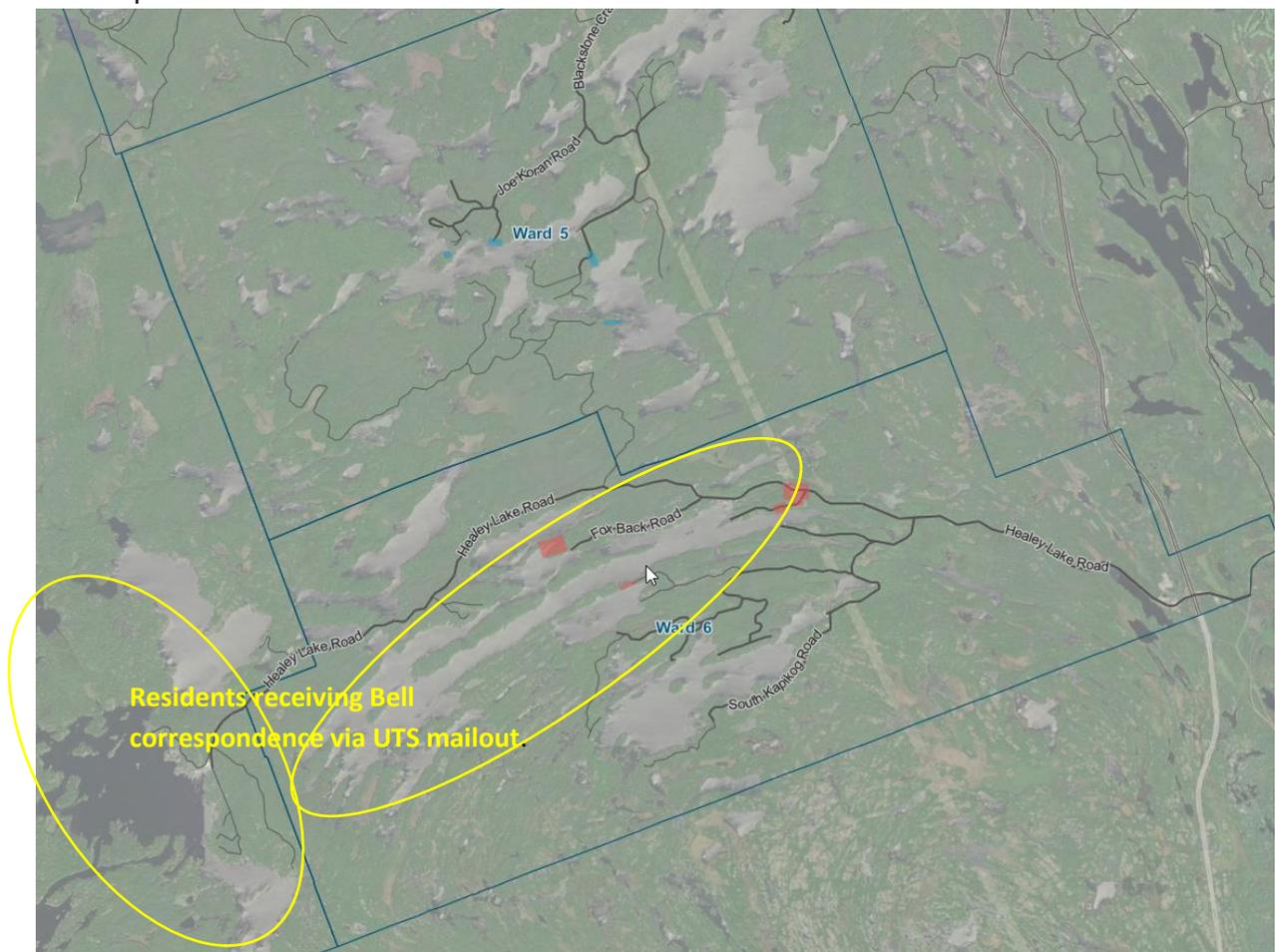
UTS Consultants are noted having sent out correspondence on behalf of Bell to some property owners in the Township. Notices are informing residents of the project and work being done to build new infrastructure.

In many instances the new infrastructure will be a fibre optic service to the property or to the actual home/cottage. NOTE: this is proposed new infrastructure funded by the Province's ASHIP initiative to connect unserved and underserved properties. Property owners are not actively signing up for an internet service by accepting this work. This new provincially funded infrastructure build provides the means for a property owner to subscribe to an internet service at a later date if interested.

NEXT STEPS & ON GOING

With respect to all activities staff continue to update the Township website – Connectivity page – with updates and pertinent information.

- 1) Township staff are monitoring progress of the ASHIP initiative and resulting work in the township.



- 2) Staff from Archipelago and Seguin townships continue to collaborate and converse with Bell's primary contractor (Pickard Construction).
All parties have interests in joint communications around expected ASHIP work undertakings, highlighting the various subcontractors expected to be seen in coming months and start-work dates in various locations. Seguin Township and Archipelago Township staff continue working with project parties on creating awareness and reference information to use with the public.
- 3) Staff continue to liaise with regional connectivity advocates - Blue Sky Net and WPS SMART- to identify and pursue opportunities and solutions for consumer internet interests in the region.
- 4) Staff continue discussions with Infrastructure Ontario (IO) representatives examining what AHSIP "out-of-scope" areas exist and evaluating future servicing opportunities with the support of Infrastructure Ontario.
- 5) Staff continue to evaluate all internet service methods/options for residents and businesses in the township and engage with existing Internet Service Providers to evaluate opportunities.

Spectrum Telecom (Skerryvore and Pointe au Baril tower infrastructure) has recently acquired Lakeland Network's fixed wireless division.

Vianet has completed installation of an additional repeater tower in Pointe au Baril that will support service enhancements to properties along Hwy 69 near the Pointe au Baril Station. Additionally, *Vianet* has expressed interests in enhanced service coverage for the Pointe au Baril Islands through additional antennas placed on the Pointe au Baril Range Tower.

Rogers Communications has expressed expansion in services using the existing Skerryvore tower.

Bell's activities appear currently rooted in the Accelerated High Speed Internet Program (AHSIP) and a previously announced project – proposed Healey/Kapikog tower – has no current news or indications of 2024 work undertakings.

Respectfully Submitted,



Joe Villeneuve
Manager of Corporate Services

Glen Barnden

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Connectivity Advisor