

The Township of The Archipelago

Information Report to Council

Report No.: Connectivity 2023_08

Date: August 14th, 2023

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Subject: Connectivity – Activity Report

BACKGROUND

Ongoing activities related to the *Province's Accelerated High Speed Internet Program (AHSIP) installation - through Bell* - for connectivity.

The Province of Ontario has launched the Ontario High-Speed Internet Access Map. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-connects-making-high-speed-internet-accessible-in-every-community> This interactive map identifies the locations and details of provincially funded high-speed internet projects, as well as the location of existing high-speed internet service availability.

AUGUST INTERIM

1) Staff continue to discuss with Vianet's representatives use of existing towers within the Township and other possibilities to enhance internet service coverage. Vianet continues to determine possible business cases to expand service considering the AHSIP implications to smaller ISPs and the Bell "LOT" subsidy for residential locations on mainland roads.

2) Staff have undertaken several information exchanges with NetSpectrum to discuss the ISP's improved internet service offerings available from two locations – Skerryvore and Pointe au Baril harbour – in the northern portion of the township. Information has been posted on the website and marketing interests (signs and mailouts) are being worked on by NetSpectrum. The Skerryvore tower that NetSpectrum owns has garnered interests from additional ISPs to further enhance services in that area including a significant portion of the Pointe au Baril Islands.

3) Staff spoke with senior VALO (<https://valonetworks.com/>) executives regarding potential solutions for community broadband networks. Valo currently provides platform solutions and services for network operations for municipalities in France, Spain, Singapore, USA and Pictou County Nova Scotia. For more info on the Pictou community network click <https://ruralnet.munpict.ca/>

Concept and potential interests to be examined further by working group.

4) Staff reached out again to Infrastructure Ontario for any updates for second round funding for solutions to connectivity for residents not included (out of scope) in the Provincial government's AHSIP funding. There have been two briefs circulated to municipalities in the past week regarding the legislation around this Provincially funded initiative (ASHIP) and a reminder that activities around enhancing internet services across the province is a priority with timelines and deployment frameworks in place.

5) Staff and Councillors from Wards 5 & 6 are examining correspondence from Bell to residents in neighbouring areas that demonstrate activities by Bell in building new fibre infrastructure have started. Communication from staff back to Bell representatives is asking for details in the information package being sent to residents and also for a status update on activities in our region.

NEXT STEPS ON GOING

Staff continue to update the Township website – Connectivity page – with updates and pertinent information relating to the activities referenced in this report.

Also, analysis of the AHSIP in-scope/out-of-scope properties continues with the intent to engage Infrastructure Ontario with interests to fund projects that provide internet solutions to all properties in the township.

Efforts continue to review potential infrastructure/assets in the township with the intent to leverage resources and engage ISPs to advance services and solutions that increase the connectivity possibilities and choices for our residents.

Respectfully Submitted,



Joe Villeneuve
Manager of Corporate Services



Glen Barnden
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