

The Township of The Archipelago

Information Report to Council

Report No.: Connectivity 2023-11

Date: November 16, 2023

Originator: Joe Villeneuve, Manager of Corporate Services

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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. Note: within the Township of The Archipelago projects will be undertaken by Bell.

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.

NOVEMBER INTERIM

- 1) Township staff are monitoring the Province's Broadband One Window - <https://aship-landing-bow2.hub.arcgis.com/pages/broadband-one-window> for work applications that require municipal sign-off. To date nothing has been submitted through the BOW application. Though email, Staff have been engaged by Bell's Planning and Implementation Team to review proposed work around the Healey Lake area. A project for drilling approximately 872m of conduit as well as placing new poles along Earls Rd, Healey Lake Rd, Penn Rd, and Fox Back Rd is underway.

2) Staff from the Archipelago and Seguin township continue to engage Bell's primary contractor (Pickard Construction) around the scope of work starting in the respective municipalities. Coordinated municipal mapping activities are underway to examine and assess the potential of improved internet servicing to residents and businesses and communicate interest back to Bell and contractor.

3) Staff have spoken to regional connectivity advocates - Blue Sky Net - to debrief the activities happening across the region under the Province's AHSIP program and to further engage on collective solutions for AHSIP "out-of-scope" areas. Blue Sky Net has submitted a proposal to NOHFC to administer any potential additional funding for the remaining communities not served by the AHSIP "LOT" bids. They are waiting for a response from NOHFC and doing so in conversation with Infrastructure Ontario staff.

4) Infrastructure Ontario representatives are scheduled to meet with Township representatives November 16th. Primary discussion interests are for residents not included (out of scope) in the Provincial government's AHSIP funding and potential solutions to provide internet for all township residents.

5) Staff continue to work with all area ISPs to evaluate connectivity interests.

NetSpectrum's technical group is planning to install upgraded 900MHz distribution equipment on the Skerryvore tower in the spring of 2024. This equipment will provide connectivity to some subscribers in the area that don't have direct line of sight (LOS) to the existing tower. This equipment can only provide 10 Mbps download speed but it will provide an option to some customers in fringe areas that currently do not receive service due to the LOS factor.

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,



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Manager of Corporate Services



Glen Barnden
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