

The Township of The Archipelago

Recommendation Report to Council

Report No.: Connectivity 2024-05a

Date: May 16, 2024

Originator: Joe Villeneuve, Manager of Corporate Services

Subject: Connectivity – Use of Municipal Lands

RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT Council support the use of municipal Road Shoulders, Road Allowances and Shore Road Allowances for work, including the installation of a pedestal, pertaining to the Province's Accelerated High Speed Internet Program; and,
 2. THAT Staff be authorized to grant Municipal Consent approvals for requests that conform to the requirements of the Municipal Consent Application and Review form.
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BACKGROUND

The Province's ***Accelerated High Speed Internet Program (AHSIP)*** 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.

In the Township of The Archipelago, Bell is the internet service provider that has signed agreements with the Ontario Provincial Government to complete the build of new infrastructure. Bell's subcontractors – Pickard Construction, UTS, GTel, Mike's Communication, VistaCare Communications - are some of the companies fulfilling aspects of work associated with this project. These companies are moving across the Township at varying speeds with respect to project design, approval seeking and build stages.

NEW INFORMATION

In 2021, Ontario passed the [Supporting Broadband and Infrastructure Expansion Act, 2021](#) to help speed up construction of broadband projects. To build upon this legislation, the Ontario government passed the [Getting Ontario Connected Act, 2022](#) which further reduces barriers, duplication and delays.

This legislation impacts the Township with respect to the role the Township fulfills in reviewing Municipal Consents.

NOTE: *Municipal Consent (MC) is the municipality's authorization for a utility to occupy a specific established location within the Municipality's Rights-Of-Way (ROW). Permission to install a new or move existing facilities within a ROW is required prior to commencement of work. Once a permit request application is submitted, Municipalities shall respond within the legislated performance timelines included in the Building Broadband Faster Act*

Township staff are receiving MC requests to use municipal road shoulders, road allowances and shore road allowances to deploy new fiber optic cable and/or house new pedestal boxes that contain fibre splice points.

In the latter example, a MC would be requested to locate a pedestal (equipment box) on the shoreline of Township-owned property that, in some cases, may be situated in front of private property. See Figure 1 attached.

ANALYSIS/OPTIONS

Both options align with the:

- *Supporting Broadband and Infrastructure Expansion Act, 2021*
- *Getting Ontario Connected Act, 2022*
- *Guiding Principles | Township of The Archipelago Broadband Initiative*

Option 1 – Blanket support to use municipal lands

1. THAT Council hereby support the use of municipal Road Allowances and Shore Road Allowances for work pertaining, including the installation of a pedestal, to the Province's Accelerated High Speed Internet Program; and,
2. THAT Staff be permitted to grant Municipal Consent for requests that conform to the requirements of the Municipal Consent Application and Review form.

Option 2 – Conditional support to use municipal lands

1. THAT Council support the use of municipal Road Shoulders and Road Allowances for work pertaining to the Province's Accelerated High Speed Internet Program; and,

2. THAT Council support the use of municipal Shore Road Allowances for work pertaining to the Province's Accelerated Hight Speed Internet Program on the condition that the applicant first gain the approval of the abutting landowner if the Shore Road Allowance fronts private property; and,
3. THAT Staff be authorized to grant Municipal Consent approvals for requests that conform to the requirements of the Municipal Consent Application and Review form.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications to the 2024 budget.

Without realizing the maximum potential of the Province's AHSIP investment for new infrastructure build, the Township may be further called upon to address and fund internet needs for its residents from future budgets.

STRATEGIC PLAN

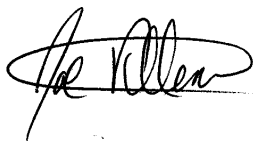
This direction is in alignment with the following Strategic Priorities contained within our Strategic Plan:

- Sustainable & Cost-Effective Services
- Effective Relationships & Partnerships
- Leadership & Communication

CONCLUSION

Staff are recommending Option 1 for Council's approval. This option will simplify the process and significantly speed up time associated with returning a Municipal Consent (MC) response. Staff are working with contractors through the MC request process and have input to mitigate any foreseeable issues.

Respectfully Submitted,



Joe Villeneuve
Manager of Corporate Services

I concur with this report.



John B. Fior
CAO

Attached:
Figure 1 – Shoreline Pedestal
Municipal Consent Application and Review Form
Guiding Principles | Township of The Archipelago Broadband Initiative