

The Township of The Archipelago

Information Report to Council

Report No.: Corporate Services-2022-04

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Subject: Connectivity – Activity Report

HISTORY

Internet Connectivity remains a topic of interest for many residents and Council is active with various initiatives, news and service providers in understanding how our residents will acquire service or benefit from enhanced services. A complete list of undertakings and events spreading over multiple years can be found on our website's Connectivity page.

Reference: <https://www.thearchipelago.on.ca/p/internet-connectivity>

NEW INFORMATION

Summer 2022 Activity Update

One of the more significant initiatives unfolding this year is the Province's - **Ontario Accelerated High Speed Internet Program (AHSIP)**.

The Provincial government continues its work towards *full broadband connectivity in Ontario by the end of 2025* through the Building Broadband Faster Act (2021) and Getting Ontario Connected Act (2022) coupled with the Accelerated High Speed Internet Program (\$4 billion funding) for unserved and underserved communities.

On August 4th, 2022 the Province of Ontario announced it has signed agreements with eight internet service providers to bring access to as many as 339 municipalities across Ontario.

The Township of the Archipelago is named as one of the municipalities that will be partially served by the service agreements under the AHSIP. The announcement references The Archipelago in a project awarded to Bell Canada. The Township's Connectivity Ad Hoc Committee continues to engage Bell representatives to express interests and learn details of their project. So far we've learned the rules of the funding are to *service residential addresses on roads*. Service type will be Fibre To The Home (FTTH) and it will be the better part of year before planning efforts result in any new service hookups.

Identified by the Connectivity Committee is the issue that mapping, used to establish the scope and deliveries in Bell's project contract, is largely incomplete and misrepresenting the water access properties/community. *There remains a need to also provide a solution to service water access residents within our municipality.* Township representatives continue to engage Bell - and all Internet Service Providers - to identify the offshore/water access community and facilitate internet solutions for these markets.

To address the service disparity noted in the AHSIP a letter was sent to the Province, addressed to the Honourable Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure regarding the AHSIP initiative. The letter noted concerns that the AHSIP may not account for the many water access residences and the need for flexible internet solutions that would be required to provide service coverage to geographically diverse settings like those that the Archipelago exhibits.

Subsequently, Ministry staff has engaged the Township's Connectivity Committee on several findings and interests. During a recent meeting Township representatives we were informed by Ministry staff that their team looked at different data sources and other stakeholders' available data (e.g. Census Canada, MPAC) to identify all 'overlooked' premises. The Ministry of Infrastructure continues to work with the AHSIP project winners to identify all properties and identify solutions (including fixed wireless internet services) that will allow them to realize their full connectivity goal for Ontario by 2025. The Township is working at developing a resident survey to define underserved areas and support information flow back to both the Ministry of Infrastructure and Bell – *stay tuned for a request to participate in telling us how well you are currently served with internet options.*

The Township of The Archipelago remains active in a number of ongoing initiatives to improve internet service throughout the township and advocate for cost-effective, reliable, high-speed internet for all residents. Reference Guiding Principles document on Connectivity webpage.

Ongoing Internet Service Provider (ISP) Connectivity Initiatives

Vianet

- New 250' tower in Pointe au Baril offering fixed wireless.
- ToA representatives have invited Vianet to review the Township of The Archipelago to examine under-serviced markets and utilize infrastructure assets to enhance service coverage throughout the township. An in-person tour occurred September 14th.

Bell

- Bell's proposal for a new Kapikog Lake Tower (W771) reportedly in project build queue for fall of 2022. The MNRF has granted Bell a licence of occupation to use Crown Land for the project (adjacent Penn Road).
- Cited as ISP in AHSIP funding announcement attributed to enhancing internet services within The Archipelago.
- Observed enhancing backhaul networks to improve/broaden network capabilities. Call directly or monitor website for new service offerings.
- ToA Representatives held discussions with senior management at Bell Networks. Both parties working together to examine property disbursement and identify service needs for underserved areas.

Rogers

- New wired services offered primarily in Pointe au Baril – land access.

Lakeside Wireless

- Fixed wireless services available in South Archipelago only – Healey Lake and Kapikog Lake.

NetSpectrum

- Limited fixed wireless services available in North Archipelago only – Skerryvore and Pointe au Baril.

Other ISP News/Announcements

Starlink

- Satellite. Eligibility by region – possible subscriptions to physical addresses within Archipelago

Telesat

- Satellite/Terrestrial distribution. Might be a part of the connectivity solution for remote communities in Ontario. www.telesat.com
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STRATEGIC PLAN

- Sustainable & Cost Effective Services
 - Effective Relationships & Partnerships
 - Leadership & Communications
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Respectfully Submitted,



Joe Villeneuve
Manager of Corporate Services



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