

*Request for Decision    United Townships of Head, Clara & Maria Council*

Type of Decision									
Meeting Date	Friday, May 8, 2015				Report Date	Tuesday, May-05-15			
Decision Required	X	Yes		No	Priority	X	High		Low
Direction	X	Information Only			Type of Meeting	X	Open		Closed
EORN and the 1% - Report #08/05/15/1103									

**Subject:**

Commentary on the EORN information circulated at the OGRA/ROMA Conference.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the following resolution be adopted by Council expressing our desire for continued efforts to provide adequate and affordable high speed for our residents.

**WHEREAS** staff and council heard at the Strategic Planning meeting that affordable and reliable high speed internet service is of utmost importance to our residents;

**AND WHEREAS** the Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) was tasked with providing high speed service for member eastern Ontario communities;

**AND WHEREAS** EORN has completed its project of building a rural broadband network while Head, Clara & Maria, one of the member Eastern Ontario municipalities, remains without reliable or affordable high speed connectivity;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Council of the United Townships of Head, Clara & Maria does hereby implore EORN to continue to research and/or negotiate options for reliable affordable service within our community.

**BACKGROUND/EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The following is information shared at the 2015 OGRA/ROMA Conference in 2015.

"Eastern Ontario Regional Network Maps Eastern Ontario's Digital Future  
02/24/15

**Long-term Digital Strategy Shared at 2015 OGRA/ROMA Combined Conference**

TORONTO, ON (February 24, 2014) – The Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) today released its long-term Digital Strategy, which provides a road map for Eastern Ontario to become a leader in using rural broadband access to help create strong, sustainable communities.

The strategy was presented by EORN at a meeting of provincial ministers during the 2015 OGRA/ROMA Combined Conference in Toronto. The annual conference is hosted jointly by the Ontario Good Roads Association (OGRA) and the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA).

EORN was first created by the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC) to build a \$170-million rural broadband network, which was completed last fall with the support of the federal, provincial and municipal governments and the investment of private sector partners. The network, which is scalable to meet growing needs, serves more than one million people across 50,000 square kilometres of rural Eastern Ontario.

"The Digital Strategy aims to build on our success, by making sure that the network keeps pace with changing demands," said EORN Chair David Burton. "Through continued advocacy and partnership, EORN will support communities in using the network to its fullest potential."

EORN's Digital Strategy focuses on expanding access and empowering residents, businesses and organizations to use high-speed internet services. Current priorities include:

- Using EORN's 5,500-kilometre fibre optic backbone to improve mobile broadband access and cell service;
- Leveraging the network for regional economic development activities;
- Increasing the number of residents and businesses who take advantage of the network; and,
- Using the network to improve municipal and other public services.

"We are pleased that more than 99 per cent of residents and businesses can access high-speed internet as a result of the project. It is an important first step," said EOWC Chair Eric Duncan. "High-speed internet access is a critical tool for our regional economic development strategy, which aims to create thriving communities across Eastern Ontario."

The full strategy is available at [www.eorn.ca](http://www.eorn.ca) under "Resources."

For more information contact:

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### **Policy Impact:**

The lack of viable internet service provides a disservice to our residents. Entertainment, business, educational, financial and informational uses are all adversely affected. We recognize that we are a small rural part of this larger community but feel that our residents have every right to the same services at the same prices as others.

### **Financial Considerations/Budget Impact:**

Individually, residents are subjected to exorbitant costs related to service provision. The costs to the municipality include: reduced development, reduced economic development, lack of home based businesses and deterrents to those who might wish to relocate. This results in reduced assessment value and lower tax base. Municipally, staff deal with slow, interrupted service on a regular basis increasing time required to complete tasks.

### **Others Consulted:**

Strategic Planning group;

Approved and Recommended by the Clerk

Melinda Reith,  
Municipal Clerk