

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

Type of Decision									
Meeting Date	Friday, September 11, 2015				Report Date	Friday, August 28, 2015			
Decision Required	X	Yes		No	Priority	X	High		Low
Direction	X	Information Only			Type of Meeting	X	Open		Closed
Clerk's - Report #11/09/15/801 - 3									

Subject: Do it Yourself Broadband

Options for consideration and discussion for Council involvement in obtaining broadband or high speed internet for our residents. This was a topic discussed during the Strategic Planning public meeting in March ranking second on Council's final list.

RECOMMENDATION

WHEREAS the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) is undergoing a review of basic telecommunications services which in part is to determine "what services Canadians require to participate meaningfully in the digital economy and what prices Canadians should pay for these services" as well as what areas are underserved";

AND WHEREAS the Federation of Canadian Municipalities is working diligently with the CRTC to ensure that increased federal funding is a component of developing infrastructure critical to rural, northern and remote communities;

AND WHEREAS the Easter Ontario Regional Network (EORN) fell short of providing Head, Clara & Maria residents with reliable, cost-effective service equitable to that received by Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) or fibre optic clients;

AND WHEREAS new technologies are constantly being developed and rolled out;

AND WHEREAS the Council of the United Townships of Head, Clara & Maria did include "connectivity" and "connectedness" as components of both its mission and vision statements;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Council does hereby direct staff to work at investigating alternative service delivery methods of high speed or broadband internet to our residents at a reliable service level and affordable cost;

AND FURTHER to investigate as yet unannounced funding opportunities at both the federal and provincial levels to assist us in delivering this service to our residents.

BACKGROUND/EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Federal government's Small Communities Fund allows application for broadband or connectivity. Do we have any options? - Expression of Interest to be completed by September 30, 2015. (We are not in a position to apply for funding for a service but perhaps for a feasibility study?)

From their site...<http://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-community-infrastructure-fund-and-small-communities-fund-program-guidelines>

"Connectivity and broadband

1. Objectives

To invest in broadband infrastructure that contributes to economic growth, a clean environment and stronger communities.

2. Subcategories

- *High-speed backbone*
- *Point of presence*
- *Local distribution within communities*
- *Satellite capacity*

Notes: *a. In Canada, broadband service refers to download speeds of 1.5 Mbps or greater. In Telecom Regulatory Policy 2011-291, the CRTC established a universal broadband Internet access target download speed of 5 Mbps.*

3. Outcomes and Benefits for Canadians

- *The project must demonstrate how it provides benefits to Canadians in support of one or more of the following outcomes:*
 - *Increasing in geographical area, to account for industrial/resource development investments, with access to broadband speeds of 1.5 Mbps or higher, contributing to improved economic development in remote areas; or*
 - *Increasing in number of Canadians with access to broadband speeds of 1.5 Mbps or higher, contributing to improving the quality, accessibility and effectiveness of public services."*

Funding opportunities such as this arise with increasing frequency. We need to be ready to apply when the funding is announced. How much money do we have to contribute? Can we create a private funding component – end user's agreeing to cover up front costs? How much federal and provincial funds are available?

An email has been sent to EORN – to ask how much would it cost to have broadband to Stonecliffe (cost/km) and to ask if there are contacts who might be beneficial to us in find an "outside the box" solution.

Lisa Severson has agreed to come to speak with staff and Council to determine what options we might have. A tentative date of September 29 has been set. I will confirm so that as many members of Council (and perhaps the public if Council so directs) might be able to attend.

It is staff recommendation that time and resources be utilized to prepare HCM for the next round of available funding by investigating options, hiring consultants to prepare feasibility studies, reaching out to all contacts to determine viable options? Public interest? Possibly have university students take us on as a project? Opportunities are endless; we just need to reach out.

Options/Discussion:

New technologies are being introduced all the time. With the right people working on the project perhaps there is a solution to us. Xplornet now has towers as close as Pembroke with direct connections with "fixed wireless" affording up to 500 g per month and speeds up to 10 mb/s. What does it cost for a tower? Or to have that technology put on a Bell tower here? Is it even possible? The potential should be explored.

Financial Considerations/Budget Impact:

None at this time.

Policy Impact:

As per policy.

Others Consulted:

Approved and Recommended by the Clerk

Melinda Reith,

Municipal Clerk

Melinda Reith