

Clause 8 in Report No. 16 of Committee of the Whole was adopted, without amendment, by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held on November 16, 2017.

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York Region Broadband Strategy Annual Update 2017

Committee of the Whole recommends adoption of the following recommendation contained in the report dated October 27, 2017 from the Commissioner of Corporate Services and Chief Planner:

1. The Regional Clerk circulate a copy of this report to York Region Members of Parliament and Members of Provincial Parliament, local municipalities, Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Growth; and the Federal Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development.

Report dated October 27, 2017 from the Commissioner of Corporate Services and Chief Planner now follows:

1. Recommendation

It is recommended that:

1. The Regional Clerk circulate a copy of this report to York Region Members of Parliament and Members of Provincial Parliament, local municipalities, Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Growth; and the Federal Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development.

2. Purpose

This report provides an annual update to Regional Council on activities and progress made towards implementing York Region's Broadband Strategy.

3. Background and Previous Council Direction

High-speed broadband connectivity promotes economic growth

Improved broadband connectivity can help influence investment and business growth while serving to enhance the live/work ratio and lifestyle needs of communities throughout the Region. This has been consistently demonstrated in jurisdictions across Ontario, Canada and around the globe.

Council approved a Broadband Strategy to guide activities designed to improve broadband access throughout York Region

Economic growth is a priority of Council and on [May 15, 2014](#), Regional Council adopted a report outlining a Broadband Strategy based on the following objectives:

- Encourage investments that will provide higher connectivity speeds within York Region
- Create an environment that facilitates open, competitive and innovative services and applications
- Maximize the efficient investment of both public and private sector funding to improve connectivity throughout York Region

The Vision of the York Region Broadband Strategy is:

To establish York Region as a Gigabit Region, recognized for its leadership in fostering an eco-system of collaboration and business innovation within a connected lifestyle community.

Activities to implement the Broadband Strategy are categorized under three priority areas

Activities to achieve the Vision of the Broadband Strategy are categorized under the following Implementation Priority areas:

- Education and Advocacy Priorities
Creating awareness of the issues and opportunities relating to broadband, and promoting York Region as a connected municipality
- Municipal Process Priorities
Investigating, developing, adopting and sharing processes that enable

public and private investments in broadband infrastructure across York Region

- Infrastructure Investment Priorities
Facilitating the efficient and effective delivery of public and private investments in broadband infrastructure across York Region

Regional staff provides an annual update report to keep Council apprised of activities related to the Broadband Strategy.

4. Analysis and Implications

The York Region Broadband Strategy Advisory Task Force provided guidance on a variety of initiatives to advance implementation of the Broadband Strategy

As per Council's direction resulting from a report from [June 25, 2015](#), a York Region Broadband Strategy Advisory Task Force was assembled to provide direction and guidance on activities relating to the Broadband Strategy. Over the 24 month term of the Task Force, which concluded on October 4, 2017, eight meetings took place featuring presentations and discussions including:

- Provincial broadband initiatives in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, presented by the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development
- Implications of Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission rulings Wholesale Services & Competition CRTC 2015-326 and Basic Telecommunications Services CRTC 2015-134, presented by IBI Group
- Examples of broadband networks and initiatives in other jurisdictions that are being leveraged to enable economic and social benefits presented by: Cisco Canada, IBM Canada, Eastern Ontario Regional Network, South Western Integrated Fibre Technology Network and the Intelligent Community Forum
- Communications infrastructure and services deployment activities and plans in York Region, presented by: Bell Canada, Rogers Communications, Telus, Vianet, Xplornet, SBA Canada and Zayo Group

Under the Broadband Strategy Advisory Task Force's guidance, a number of Regional initiatives were completed since the last broadband update report provided to Regional Council on [June 23, 2016](#) and are captured in Attachment 1- Completed Broadband Strategy Initiatives. Other initiatives are ongoing and are captured in Attachment 2- Ongoing Broadband Strategy Initiatives.

Council endorsed establishing a wholly-owned Ontario Business Corporation Act corporation to operate the York Telecom Network

Regional staff retained the consulting firm of IBI Group to complete a Business Plan for the York Telecom Network. This update was presented to the Broadband Strategy Advisory Task Force for initial advice in December 2016, and final recommendations were presented to Council in February 2017 for approval.

The outcome of this work is captured in a report adopted by Council on [March 23, 2017](#). The report recommended the incorporation of a wholly-owned *Ontario Business Corporation Act* (OBCA) corporation pursuant to Section 203 of the *Municipal Act* to operate the York Telecom Network. This corporation will offer open access to York Region's communications infrastructure for public and private sector entities. These entities will pay a fee to use this infrastructure.

Regional staff formed a Working Group to oversee the development and launch of the new corporation and has led the process of recruiting a General Manager, registering the corporation (YTN Telecom Network Inc.) and establishing a Board of Directors.

Other activities include:

- Refining the business plan and preparing a funding request through the 2018 Regional Budget process
- Establishing the governance, financial and human resources mechanisms required to establish and sustain the corporation's operational and capital activities

These activities have either been completed or are in process. Once completed, these activities will enable the launch of the new corporation by January 2018. Details are captured in the October 19, 2017 report to Council.

An application was submitted to the Industry Canada Connect to Innovate fund program

The Connect to Innovate (CTI) program is a \$500 million federal fund intended to support broadband infrastructure projects in rural and remote communities across Canada.

On [March 23, 2017](#), Council adopted a report, endorsed by the Broadband Strategy Advisory Task Force, requesting a Regional contribution of up to \$6 million over a three year period to support a CTI application.

York Region collaborated with the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation and the municipalities of East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King and Whitchurch-Stouffville to complete an application for an \$18.5 million project to support the deployment of over 200 km of optical fibre throughout the region, including a link to Georgina Island.

Table 1, Connect to Innovate Application Funding Break-out, shows the financial contributions each funding partner included in the proposal submitted by York Region.

Table 1
Connect to Innovate Application Funding Break-out

Funding Source	Funding Amount (rounded)
The Regional Municipality of York	\$6,000,000
Town of Georgina	\$90,000
Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation	\$80,000
Connect to Innovate Fund	\$12,330,000
TOTAL	\$18,500,000

The application was submitted prior to the deadline on April 20, 2017 and at the time this report was written the outcome of the York Region submission was still unknown.

A nomination package was submitted to the Intelligent Community Forum 2017/2018 Intelligent Community of the Year Award program

On September 13, 2017, York Region submitted its nomination to be designated an Intelligent Community Forum “Smart21 Community of the Year”. The 21 communities that receive this annual designation are typically selected from 300 to 400 nominees from around the globe through the Intelligent Community of the Year award program.

On October 27, 2017 it was announced that York Region was selected as one of the recipients of this award. As a result, York Region has now been designated an “Intelligent Community” by the Intelligent Community Forum. This designation has the potential to be an effective addition to the Region’s investment attraction efforts. The Region’s local municipalities can also take advantage of this designation and leverage it for their own economic development initiatives.

York Region is also now invited to submit a nomination for an Intelligent Community Forum “Top 7 Intelligent Community of the Year” award, for which the winners will be announced in February 2018. All “Top 7” award winning communities will be considered as finalists for the “Intelligent Community of the Year” award, which will be announced in June 2018.

The 2016 and 2017 York Region Broadband & Innovation Summits have taken place

The second annual York Region Broadband & Innovation Summit was held on October 28, 2016 in conjunction with the TAVES Consumer Electronics Show. The theme was “York Region as an Intelligent Community”. The agenda featured presentations and panel discussions from experts in the development of Intelligent Communities. Over 150 people representing the private sector, multiple levels of government and academia attended. Attendees were split approximately 50/50 between the public and private sectors.

The third annual York Region Broadband & Innovation Summit took place on October 27, 2017 and leveraged the successes of the previous iterations of the event. The theme was “York Region as an Innovation Hub”, which is a continuation of the theme of the 2016 event: “York Region as an Intelligent Community”. Over 170 people representing a broad range of sectors and industries participated, with an approximate split of 45/55 between public and private sectors. Mr. Majid Jowhari, Member of Parliament for Richmond Hill brought greetings on behalf of the Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the Honourable Reza Moridi, Member of Provincial Parliament for Richmond Hill and Minister of Research, Innovation and Science brought greetings from the Province of Ontario.

The York Region Broadband Strategy supports the strategic objectives of several Council-approved plans

Regional Council has approved a number of strategic documents that provide direction within the current term of Council and beyond, regarding the significant role that broadband access plays in supporting Economic Development:

- **Vision 2051**; Fostering an Innovation Economy - to be supported by “Infrastructure and Resources Supporting a Knowledge Economy”
- **York Region Official Plan – 2010**; Economic Vitality (Chapter 4) - states that broadband-related initiatives support the York Region Official Plan objective “To encourage and accommodate economic activities that diversify and strengthen the Region’s economic base, employment opportunities for residents and competitive advantage for its businesses.”

- **2015 to 2019 Strategic Plan**; Strengthen the Region's Economy - Objective 3: "focusing on networks and systems that connect people, goods and services"
- **The Economic Development Action Plan 2016 to 2019**; Section C - "Innovation and Entrepreneur Development" – is grounded in the fact that high-speed connectivity promotes economic growth

5. Financial Considerations

Resources allocated to the development of the York Region Broadband Advisory Task Force and the execution of the various elements of the York Region Broadband Strategy are implemented primarily through the budget of the Planning and Economic Development Branch, in partnership with other departments, local economic development offices and external program delivery partners.

In approving the development of the York Telecom Network into a separate corporation, Council authorized expenditures of up to \$500,000 to support the establishment and operations of the new corporation in 2017. YTN Telecom Network Inc. will be included in the Region's annual budget process beginning in 2018.

The Region's share of the application to the Federal Connect to Innovate (CTI) program will be approximately \$6 million. This funding will be addressed through the 2018 budget process. If York Region's application is approved, funding will likely begin in Q1 2018.

6. Local Municipal Impact

The York Region Broadband Strategy was initiated and funded in partnership with all nine local municipalities. Ongoing participation by and partnerships with and amongst the local municipalities are critical to full execution of the Strategy.

All nine local municipalities were also engaged during the development of the York Telecom Network Business Plan and the Region worked closely with the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation as well as the municipalities of East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King Township and Whitchurch-Stouffville to complete the Connect to Innovate funding application.

Collaboration between York Region, YTN Telecom Network Inc. and each of the nine local municipalities will continue to be key to successfully identifying and implementing broadband-related priorities across the region.

7. Conclusion

Broadband continues to play an increasingly important role in local and global economies. It is imperative that York Region continue its efforts to enable improved access to high-speed broadband for businesses, institutions and residents across the Region.

Over the past year, York Region and its partners have been actively engaged in fulfilling the objectives of the York Region Broadband Strategy. A number of initiatives have been completed that have moved the Region closer to achieving its goal of becoming a Gigabit Region that fosters collaboration and innovation.

Much has been accomplished since the Broadband Strategy was first adopted by Council in 2014. Future efforts will focus on launching the new corporation to operate the York Telecom Network, working with telecommunications service providers and local municipal, university, school and health-care partners to improve broadband access and explore partnerships and funding opportunities that will enable the delivery of broadband services across the region, and taking the steps necessary to ensure York Region's development into and recognition as an Intelligent Community.

For more information on this report, please contact Doug Lindeblom, Director, Economic Strategy at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71503.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

October 27, 2017

Attachments (2)

#7964521

Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request

Completed Broadband Strategy Initiatives

Action	Description	Responsibility
York Region Broadband Strategy Advisory Task Force	<p>Three Task Force meetings engaging the public and private sectors were held on December 14, 2016, February 16, 2017 and October 4, 2017 – bringing the total number of meetings to eight.</p> <p>These meetings focused on a future direction for the York Telecom Network (YTN), the development of York Region into an Intelligent Community, designated by the Intelligent Community Forum (ICF), and the future role of the Task Force.</p> <p>The Task Force was concluded following its meeting on October 4, 2017.</p>	York Region & Local Municipalities
2016 York Region Broadband & Innovation Summit	<p>The second annual York Region Broadband & Innovation Summit was held on October 28, 2016 in conjunction with the TAVES Consumer Electronics Show.</p> <p>The theme was “York Region as an Intelligent Community” and the agenda featured presentations and panel discussions from experts in the development of Intelligent Communities.</p> <p>There were over 150 attendees from the private sector, multiple levels of government and academia with an approximate 50/50 public sector/private sector split. 95% of survey respondents indicated they would attend the Summit again.</p>	York Region
2017 York Region Broadband & Innovation Summit	<p>The third annual York Region Broadband & Innovation Summit took place on October 27, 2017 and will leverage the successes of the previous iterations of the event.</p> <p>The theme was “York Region as an Innovation Hub”, which is a continuation of the theme of the 2016 event: “York Region as an Intelligent Community”.</p> <p>Over 170 people representing a broad range of sectors and industries participated, with an approximate split of 45/55 between public and private sectors. Mr. Majid Jowhari, Member of Parliament for Richmond Hill brought greetings on behalf of the Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the Honourable Reza Moridi, Member of Provincial Parliament for Richmond Hill and Minister of Research, Innovation and Science brought greetings from the Province of Ontario.</p>	York Region

Action	Description	Responsibility
Connect to Innovate Fund Application	<p>The Connect to Innovate program is a \$500 million Federal fund intended to support broadband infrastructure projects in rural and remote communities across Canada.</p> <p>Regional Council adopted a report on March 23, 2017 requesting up to \$6 million over a three year period to support a Connect To Innovate funding application.</p> <p>York Region collaborated with the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation and the municipalities of East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King and Whitchurch-Stouffville to complete an application for an \$18.5 million project to support the deployment of over 200 km of optical fibre throughout the region, including a link to Georgina Island.</p> <p>The application was submitted prior to the deadline on April 20, 2017. A response is pending.</p>	York Region, Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation, Town of Georgina, Town of East Gwillimbury, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, Township of King
York Telecom Network Business Plan Development	<p>Regional staff engaged the consulting firm of IBI Group to complete a Business Plan for the York Telecom Network.</p> <p>An update of the analysis was presented to the Broadband Strategy Advisory Task Force for advice in December 2016 and recommendations were presented in February 2017.</p> <p>The outcomes of this work are captured in a report that was approved by Council on March 23, 2017.</p>	York Region

Ongoing Broadband Strategy Initiatives

Action	Description	Responsibility
<p>Intelligent Community Forum Intelligent Community Accelerator Program</p>	<p>York Region enrolled in the Intelligent Community Accelerator Program offered by the Intelligent Community Forum.</p> <p>This program is designed to provide participating communities with a set of development tools to improve competitiveness, deepen social inclusion, and enhance their ability to adapt in today's fast-moving Broadband Economy.</p> <p>York Region has completed the first three modules of the program:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keynote Address (October 2016) 2. Master Class (January 2017) 3. Metrics Data Collection (Q3 2017) <p>The remaining module (Mentoring) will involve interactions with assigned Intelligent Community development experts from across the globe.</p> <p>The program will be completed throughout the remainder of 2017 and in Q1 & Q2 of 2018.</p>	<p>York Region and Local Municipalities, Post-secondary Institutions, Schools and Hospitals</p>
<p>Intelligent Community Forum "Intelligent Community" designation</p>	<p>On September 12, 2017, York Region submitted its nomination to be designated an "Smart21 Community of the Year" by the Intelligent Community Forum.</p> <p>The 21 communities that receive this annual designation are typically selected from 300 to 400 nominees from around the globe.</p> <p>On October 27, 2017 it was announced that York Region was selected as one of the recipients of this award.</p> <p>As a result, York Region is invited to submit a nomination for an Intelligent Community Forum "Top 7 Intelligent Community of the Year" award, which will be announced in February 2018. Only recipients of the "Smart21" designation are eligible for the "Top 7" award and designation.</p> <p>All "Top 7" award winning communities will be considered as finalists for the "Intelligent Community of the Year" award in June 2018.</p>	<p>York Region</p>

Action	Description	Responsibility
<p>Conduit Deployment Policy Review</p>	<p>York Region Transportation, IT Services and Economic Strategy staff have initiated a review of the standards and processes that oversee the installation of optical fibre conduit along Regional rights-of-way.</p> <p>This review includes collaboration with local municipalities and interacting with other jurisdictions outside York Region.</p>	<p>York Region</p>
<p>York Telecom Network Business Corporation Development</p>	<p>Regional Council has approved the incorporation of a wholly-owned Ontario Business Corporation Act corporation pursuant to Section 203 of the Municipal Act to operate the York Telecom Network. This corporation will offer open access to York Region’s communications infrastructure for public and private sector entities.</p> <p>Regional staff formed a Transition Team to oversee the development and launch of the new corporation and has led the process of recruiting a General Manager, registering the corporation (YTN Telecom Network Inc.) and establishing a Board of Directors.</p> <p>Other activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refining the business plan and preparing a funding request through the 2018 Regional Budget process • Establishing the governance, financial and human resources mechanisms required to establish and sustain the corporation’s operational and capital activities <p>These activities have either been completed or are in the process of being completed.</p> <p>The completion of these activities will enable the launch of the new corporation in January 2018.</p>	<p>York Region</p>

Action	Description	Responsibility
<p>York Region Research & Education Network</p>	<p>Regional staff will continue to work with the Ontario Research and Innovation Optical Network (ORION) and local municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals (MUSH) sector partners to facilitate the development of a York Region Research and Education Network leveraging the ORION Point-of-Presence at Southlake Regional Health Centre.</p> <p>The establishment of the YTN as a separate entity has the potential to accelerate the development of this network.</p> <p>Staff will continue to explore how municipal broadband infrastructure projects can be leveraged to attract private sector investments and public sector funding to increase broadband access across the Region.</p>	<p>York Region, ORION and Local MUSH Partners</p>
<p>Ongoing Engagement with Local Municipalities and Telecom Service Providers</p>	<p>Regional staff will continue to engage local municipal staff and Telecom Service Providers on initiatives that fall under each of the Implementation Priority areas of the York Region Broadband Strategy.</p> <p>This will include exploration of partnerships and projects that leverage Regional assets such as: the YTN, buildings and towers, and Regional rights-of-way.</p>	<p>York Region</p>
<p>Connect to Innovate Fund Application</p>	<p>York Region is currently awaiting the outcome of its Connect to Innovate funding application, which is expected to be announced in Q4 2017.</p> <p>If successful, Regional staff will oversee the deployment of over 200km of conduit and fibre to rural and remote communities across the Region over a three year timeframe – including to the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation.</p>	<p>York Region, Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation, Town of East Gwillimbury, Town of Georgina, Township of King, and Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville</p>