



The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Technology & Client Services

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Shaun Fuerth, Director Technology & Client Services

Date to Council: May 10, 2022

Report Number: TCS-2022-04

Subject: Tecumseh Rural Broadband Advisory Committee (TRBAC)
Update

Recommendations

It is recommended:

That Technology & Client Services Report TCS-2022-04, regarding the Tecumseh Rural Broadband Advisory Committee, **be received**.

Background

As their Regular Council Meeting held on April 27, 2021, Council passed Motion RCM-136/21:

That Report ICS-2021-02 entitled "Rural Broadband Advisory Committee",
be received;

And that the striking of a Rural Broadband Advisory Committee
(Committee) as set out in this report and in accordance with the attached
Terms of Reference, be approved;

And further that a Notice of Call be issued for Applications for the
Committee;

And furthermore that the notice be posted on the Town's website, Facebook and Twitter page, and advertised in the local media;

And furthermore over that consideration for applications be reviewed at the Council Meeting to be held on June 8, 2021;

And furthermore over that Councillors Jobin and Houston be appointed as the Council representatives on the Committee.

Subsequent to this endorsement from Council, a public notice was published to encourage residents and business owners in the community to submit applications for membership on the new Tecumseh Rural Broadband Advisory Committee (TRBAC).

Upon review of the applications a Committee was struck at the June 8, 2021 Regular Council Meeting with the following membership approved by Council:

Councillor Brian Houston (Chairperson)
Councillor Tania Jobin (Vice-Chairperson)
Mayor Gary McNamara (member)
Nicole Colenutt (member)
Aldo DiNardo (member)
Darrin Drouillard (member)
Dan Grosu (member)

The mandate of the new committee was instituted as follows:

- Identify broadband and internet initiatives;
- Champion high-speed connectivity across the Town;
- Interface and consult with stakeholders;
- Provide feedback and input into policy development, as required;
- Encourage private investment that will provide higher connectivity speeds within the Town;
- 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 the Town;
- Develop tools to assist with attraction of broadband infrastructure investments;
- Work with local municipal partners, schools and health sector throughout the Town to improve research, innovation and education capabilities in the Town;

- Advocate for ratepayers in underserved areas by engaging public and private sector stakeholders to investigate opportunities for partnerships that promote Broadband development and access for residents, businesses and institutions;
- Investigate and coordinate infrastructure investment priorities;
- Review and refine specific goals, outcomes and timelines for short-term and medium-term priorities.

Comments

The Committee has convened four (4) times since July 2021 through virtual meetings that have been livestreamed via the Town of Tecumseh website.

Committee accomplishments to date include:

1. Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA) – Speedtest

Representatives from CIRA were in attendance at the inaugural meeting of the Committee to discuss the importance of identifying where underserved areas related to broadband connectivity are located within the municipality. Adequate 'broadband connectivity' is described as an internet connection that has a minimum of 50 megabits per second (mbps) download speed and 10mbps upload speed. The committee approved the adoption of an Internet Performance Test (IPT) mapping tool that was subsequently launched as tecumsehspeedtest.ca. A marketing campaign was developed through the Town website, social media and postcards were delivered to all residents (see Attachment 1). This campaign resulted in over 1,300 data points received to date depicting connection speeds in all five (5) wards. The IPT results within the municipality has assisted in understanding areas of the Town that are currently underserved. This data and mapping also assists with identifying areas for future network expansions and securing grant funding (see Attachment 2).

2. Connecting Windsor-Essex (W-E) Initiatives

Connecting Windsor-Essex is a non-profit organization comprised of a Board of Directors, a Board Executive, and a consortium of over 40 member companies, associations, councils and other organizations in Windsor-Essex whose focus is building high-speed networks in Windsor-Essex. The Town of Tecumseh is a member as a lower tier municipality within the County of Essex. Representatives from Connecting W-E attended the September 2021 Committee meeting. Connecting W-E defines an 'intelligent community' as having the following six indicators: broadband, knowledge in the workforce, innovation, digital equality, sustainability and advocacy. Connecting W-E continues to update the Town on regional projects, grant funding opportunities, best practices and emerging

technology. An example of emerging technology is the Connecting W-E evaluation of Startlink satellite internets as an interim solution for rural residents.

3. Exploration of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)

At their December 2021 meeting, the Committee welcomed representatives from Graybar Canada to assist in understanding how a PPP would work to expand connectivity across the Town. Various options were presented with respect to scenarios whereby the Town would retain ownership of infrastructure or lease out options depending on the type of network. Administration will continue to pursue this as an option going forward.

4. Input on Provincial Policy

The Committee has assisted in reviewing and providing comment on Provincial Policy such as the RFP process for new broadband projects and locate requirements under the *Building Broadband Faster Act* guideline and regulation. The importance of focusing on how broadband high speed internet is being delivered and the challenges associated with the proposed allocation of government funding as part the Ontario government's next steps was identified. The Members supported drafting a letter regarding the procurement process concerns.

5. Engaging Local Internet Service Providers (ISP)

The Committee and Administration continue to engage local ISPs to advocate for the underserved areas of the Town. This advocacy has been successful in the past year by convening meetings with various partners in the industry to discuss how they can work together for the betterment of connectivity in the community.

ISP representatives have attended TRBAC meetings and discussed their successes and challenges in providing broadband to all residents in Tecumseh. Our Public Works department is extremely diligent in the efficient processing of roadwork applications and, in a very recent example, an ISP was able to begin work on new fibre infrastructure between Oldcastle and Maidstone resulting in the provision of a broadband option for 200 residents and business by the end of 2022 (see Attachment 3).

Administration was successful in initiating dialog between Hydro One and a local wireless ISP to explore partnerships and synergies. By utilizing Hydro One and ISP infrastructure in the Ward 5 area, this partnership could assist with 'last mile' wireless connectivity to residents in the southern areas of Tecumseh and the Municipality of Lakeshore (see Attachments 4-7).

6. Short Term Action Plan

- Continue to identify underserved areas utilizing awareness campaigns (Speedtest)

- Continue to identify and meet with ISP's – reduce barriers
- Engage 3rd private sector resources
- Advocate for those in underserved areas. This continues on a weekly basis by Town administration

7. Long Term Action Plan

- Monitor funding opportunities
- Utilize resources via Connecting W-E
- Investigate feasibility of public\private partnerships
- Introduce Economic Development component ("Tecumseh – Open for Business")

Many of the objectives found in the Committee Terms of Reference have been addressed in the above noted examples and will continue to be examined in the future.

The term of the Committee coincides with the term of Council and will be reviewed after the 2022 Municipal Election.

Consultations

None

Financial Implications

None

Link to Strategic Priorities

Applicable	2019-22 Strategic Priorities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Make the Town of Tecumseh an even better place to live, work and invest through a shared vision for our residents and newcomers.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ensure that Tecumseh’s current and future growth is built upon the principles of sustainability and strategic decision-making.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Integrate the principles of health and wellness into all of Tecumseh’s plans and priorities.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steward the Town’s “continuous improvement” approach to municipal service delivery to residents and businesses.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrate the Town’s leadership role in the community by promoting good governance and community engagement, by bringing together organizations serving the Town and the region to pursue common goals.

Communications

Not applicable

Website

Social Media

News Release

Local Newspaper

This report has been reviewed by Senior Administration as indicated below and recommended for submission by the Chief Administrative Officer.

Prepared by:

Shaun Fuerth, BCS
Director Technology & Client Services

Recommended by:

Margaret Misek-Evans, MCIP, RPP
Director Technology & Client Services and Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment Number	Attachment Name
1	Maps and images of area