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# HALDIMAND COUNTY

## Memorandum FDS-M02-2019 Update on County-Wide Broadband Internet Service



For Consideration by Council in Committee on December 10, 2019

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**To:** Mayor Hewitt and Members of Council  
**From:** Mark Merritt, CPA, CA, General Manager of Financial & Data Services

In June of 2019, Council identified the Corporate Priorities for the 2018-2022 Council Term. One of the main priorities was an initiative for High Speed County Wide Broadband Internet. The objective of this initiative is for the County facilitation of private sector investment to provide this key infrastructure required for economic prosperity and to attract businesses and residents to Haldimand County.

Since that time, staff has completed a Request for Pre-Qualification (RFPQ) to identify and short-list a sufficient number of experienced and qualified service providers for the installation and facilitation of broadband internet services across Haldimand County. In September, report FDS-02-2019 Broadband Internet in Haldimand County – Pre-Qualification Results Review identified that, out of the four (4) submissions received under the RFPQ, three of the bidders met the required score to move on to the next implementation/procurement stage. The three qualified bidders were KWIC Internet, Metroloop Inc. and Xplornet. These bidders were notified that they were pre-qualified and notification of future process would be provided as available.

It was also identified during the review of the RFPQ results that, given the diversity and complexity of the three qualified submissions, the development of the procurement and evaluations of future submissions would ensure the best service is obtained for the best value to the County. As such, Council approved obtaining third party resources to assist staff in facilitating the negotiating process and providing technical expertise with respect to each vendor's technical proposals and financial capabilities. An initial budget amendment was approved for up to \$100,000 to bring in a third party consultant to manage the procurement process from start to finish.

Since this approval, staff have sought out and brought on a third party consultant to manage the procurement process as well as recommend the additional technical and financial expertise required. The consultants selected to lead the process, Torys LLP, are the industry experts with significant experience managing the procurement process for facilitating municipal partnerships with private sector investment in broadband internet in underserved areas – particularly in northern and rural areas in Ontario.

As a result of various meetings with Torys LLP and with staff input, a revised draft timeline has been developed to facilitate the procurement stage, ultimately resulting in an agreement with the successful bidder by late spring of 2020. The revised timeline has been developed to ensure success by 'front-ending' the development of the detailed scope of work and by involving the bidders and community stakeholders in the creation of these. As a result it will ensure clarity in terms of the work required, will increase the likelihood of a successful procurement process by involving the bidders and it will avoid the potential for delays in implementation due to unforeseen issues. The implementation timeline remains in line with initial project expected milestones as outlined during the RFPQ stage. The major project stages have been identified as follows:

<b><u>Project Milestone</u></b>	<b><u>Project Details</u></b>	<b><u>Duration/ Completion Date (*)</u></b>
Develop a Statement of Work (SOW) and Project Agreement (PA)	Staff and consultant to develop a draft SOW, which will, at a minimum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• detail projects goals, strategies and objectives;</li> <li>• identify technical requirements;</li> <li>• service level agreements</li> </ul>	Approximately 5 to 6 weeks (December 2019/January 2020)
	Staff and consultant to develop a draft PA which will form the actual legal agreement to be enacted at the conclusion of the NRFP process	
	Final “Draft” documents to be shared with proponents and stakeholders for feedback. This will involve a series of interactions between the County and each proponent.	Approximately 10 weeks (February 2020/April 2020)
	Finalize SOW and PA based on Feedback received.	
Develop/Issue the Negotiated Request For Proposal (NRFP)	Draft the framework of the NRFP.	December 2019 through April 2020
	Incorporate the final SOW and PA into the final NRFP.	
	Issue, evaluate and negotiations with preferred proponent	April 2020/May 2020
Execute Project Agreement	Parties to execute the Project Agreement based on the results of the NRFP.	May 2020

(\*) – Based on consultant’s estimates from similar scale projects.

Tory’s LLP has identified that, in their experience, this revised approach is integral to ultimately execute an agreement with a service provider and that the up front time required to ensure that the Scope of Work and Project Agreement are comprehensive, and have input from the bidders and are understood by all, are fundamental to a successful project. The project timeline incorporates stakeholder and proponent feedback early in the procurement stages to ensure the ultimate project requirements and needs are met. Although this approach may add time leading up to the NRFP process, it is felt it will save substantial time executing the final agreement and ensuring the development and infrastructure phase is better planned and managed. The proposed change in the procurement process steps has been shared with the 3 companies who made successful submissions received under the RFPQ.

As staff and the consultant work through the stages identified above, future updates will be provided to Council and the public to keep them informed of the progress on this priority project.