

Town of Georgina

BROADBAND STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN



GEORGINA



April 2020



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GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The way we will achieve the Vision is to:

1. Leverage private public partnerships - form partnerships with service providers and seek private investments.
2. Establish policies to promote broadband deployment, such as dig once and shared infrastructure.
3. Reserve funds to leverage external funding opportunities.
4. Partner with neighbouring municipalities and First Nations.
5. Not become a competitive ISP or compete with the private sector.
6. Leverage the proposed 100+km of YorkNet fiber infrastructure.
7. Leverage our South Shore Community Broadband (SSCB) infrastructure:
 - Maintain infrastructure for Town's business continuity and internal needs.
 - Explore leasing existing towers (colocation) and potential tower enhancements based on a sustainable business plan.

GEORGINA'S BROADBAND VISION

All businesses and residents have access to affordable and reliable broadband connectivity options at the service levels they require based on technology advancements, private market forces and funding commitments from senior levels of government.

Fast and affordable internet connectivity is critical to the ability of both our residents and businesses – whether located in an urban or rural area - to fully participate in and leverage the digital world. Enhanced connectivity across Georgina will directly support the strength and resiliency of our community. Enhanced broadband will also foster the growth and competitiveness of our local economy in a time when all things are rapidly moving online.

- Mayor Margaret Quirk



TOP PRIORITIES

1. Connectivity for all residents (e.g. education, healthcare, telework) allowing them to participate fully in the digital world.
2. Leveraging broadband to foster economic development, business attraction, expansion and retention.
3. Provide community Wi-Fi, including at libraries, tourist destinations and other public facilities.
4. Connectivity for the Town of Georgina's municipal needs.



FUNDING ALTERNATIVES

1. Pursue government funding, even where cost-sharing arrangements are required.
2. Leverage our SSCB infrastructure as in-kind contribution.
3. Require private contribution in challenging areas.
4. Pursue Private-Public-Partnership (P3) model (e.g. cost share with ISP).
5. Partnerships with neighbouring municipalities.
6. Explore tax levy options (e.g. local improvement charge).

ACTION PLAN

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Establish a Broadband Champion

The Broadband Champion will drive the vision, guiding principles and top priorities as well as provide direction and reduce barriers to success.

Develop a Request for Information (RFI)

Issue a Request for Information (RFI) to gather input from internet service providers (ISPs) and other entities that may be interested in providing services in line with Georgina's vision. The objective of the RFI is to inform the next steps of the Broadband roadmap. The RFI will seek input on a variety of options:

- Provide the Town with recommendations on the kind and type of broadband infrastructure needed to enhance service that takes into consideration: maximizing the SSCB network, leveraging YorkNet's proposed 10-year plan as well as the potential implementation of community Wi-Fi.
- Evidence that such solutions will attain and exceed the CRTC's broadband objectives with a demonstrable growth trajectory.
- Recommendations for possible joint pilot projects that can enhance connectivity and/or technology selection.
- Maximizing Georgina's positioning in upcoming federal and provincial funding programs including defined roles, responsibilities and contribution expectations.

The results of the RFI will inform the next steps with regards to moving forward. Recommendations will be provided to Council for approval.

Policy Development

Undertake the development of key policies that clearly define and outline Georgina's requirements for broadband deployment projects with the intent of providing clarity, reducing barriers and increasing predictability for proposed implementation projects.

Such policies might include:

- **Dig Once Policy:** reduce the cost of broadband deployment and road repairs by requiring internet service providers to place their conduit during road construction projects or by the Town placing its own conduit that can then be leased by ISPs.
- **Development Approvals Process:** review of current criteria to include support for improved connectivity, fibre conduit in developments.
- **Municipal Access Agreement:** develop a MAA that is harmonized with those of York Region and other municipal partners.
- **Wireless Tower Master Plan:** adopt a plan that maximizes and standardizes access to the SSCB assets.

