

Public Participation Plan

Project Name: Tomorrow's Broadband, Today: Clearwater County Open Access Network
Project Description: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Service Level• To ensure residents and businesses have quality broadband access, Clearwater County will invest in and own a high-speed internet broadband network to reduce the digital divide and provide further opportunities for economic prosperity and social well-being, for now and for generations to come.
Project Background: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In late March 2018, Clearwater County received Community and Regional Economic Support (CARES) grant for \$200,000.00 the development of a broadband feasibility study and action plan intended to connect more businesses to a quality internet service, create jobs and benefit broader rural community development.• Council adopted a broadband policy (February 27, 2018) that includes the following direction to administration:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ develop an Open-Access Network of broadband infrastructure to provide Internet accessibility to majority of County residents and businesses;○ develop a phased project plan, to construct and implement the OAN and broadband infrastructure;○ endeavour to contract a Network Service Provider to operate OAN; and○ not provide end-user internet services, rather invest in OAN to encourage competition from ISPs.• Council conducted a community engagement broadband demand phone survey of both residents and businesses, completed by Banister Research, to determine the level of satisfaction with existing broadband access and service providers. (2017)• Council struck committee of the whole (Nov 2017) and approved Terms of Reference (Mar 2018).• Council supported local ISP applications for <i>Connect to Innovate</i> federal grants. (2017)• Council met with community-based group Clearwater Broadband Foundation (CBF) to hear their plans and proposal for broadband projects for the region. (2016-2017)<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Council reviewed legal opinion and Administrative recommendations and declined CBF's loan request (May 2017) and project funding request (Dec 2017).• Council and Administration met with local ISPs and Telecom companies individually to discuss their future broadband plans and potential partner opportunities. (2015-2016)• Council continued its provincial and federal lobby efforts in support of funding for rural Internet projects (i.e. letters to Minister of Industry 2014; House of Commons brief 2017; meeting with Service AB Assistant Deputy Minister 2017 & 2018; letters to Service AB Minister 2018).• Council conducted a Service Level public survey to gauge community desires for service increases, decreases or new services. (2016)• Council directed Administration prepare a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a conceptual design, budget and business viability model relating to the construction or installation of communication towers and fibre optic cable and tabled the RFP pending review of Taylor Warwick report and CBF's presentations to Council. (2016)• Council directed Administration develop economic model relating to enhanced broadband service (Taylor Warwick <i>Fibre-Based Broadband Deployment Report</i> 2016)• Council struck Rural Communications Committee (RCC) in July 2015 and received final committee report as information in Feb 2016.• Council reviewed <i>Broadband Considerations and Options</i> (Taylor Warwick 2015 report).• Council considered fibre to premises model during strategic planning, similar to Olds and budgeted for Rural Communications Study. (2014, Vitel Report presented in camera 2015)

- Clearwater County was unsuccessful in *Final Mile Rural Community Program* grant application of \$390,000.00 for 3 towers. (2013)
- Council struck Internet tower sub-committee with Councillors Duncan, Korver and Vandermeer appointed. (2012)
- Council conducted gap-analysis study to determine the areas within the County that are Internet-served and potential sites for new tower construction. (2012 Vitel report)
- Council reviewed the provincial *Final Mile Rural Community Grant Program* and Council's philosophy of not assisting one local ISP over another in applying for funds (2012).
- Council supported the Rocky Gas Co-op grant application for a community broadband infrastructure program and Rocky REA through the rural development fund application - now operating as CCI Wireless (2009).
- Council met with local ISPs and the philosophy at the time was not to choose/support one ISP over another when considering tower purchases (2009).
- Council reviewed and considered tower purchases to fill in areas with service gaps and developed and Internet Assistance Program that provided a tower lease-to-own model (2005-2007 and again in 2009). One tower built using this program (2007).
- Council identified the importance of Internet in its Strategic Plans (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012-2014 and in 2015-2018 plans)

Municipal Stakeholders and Impact:

- **Identify demographics of municipal stakeholders who are involved in or impacted by a decision or action and are invited to participate.**
 - **Industry & businesses** - high impact – inform, consult and involve
 - **Residents** - high impact – inform, consult and involve
 - **Local Internet Service Providers (ISP) and Telcom companies** - high impact – inform, consult and involve
 - **Town of Rocky Mountain House, Village of Caroline and Summer Village of Burnstick Lake** – medium impact - involve
 - **Municipalities bordering Clearwater County** – low impact - inform
 - **First Nations communities** – low impact - inform; potential for high impact if tied into County's OAN or future road infrastructure projects (i.e. O'Chiese Road paving)
 - **Provincial and federal government** – low impact - inform; potential for medium to high impact if broadband funding becomes available.

Engagement purpose/objectives:

- **What decisions have been made that are not open to stakeholder input? Why?**
 - See broadband policy framework bullets above.
- **Have promises been made to stakeholders about their involvement? Yes, no, not sure. If yes, identify.**
 - Yes, at their March 27, 2018 regular meeting Council indicated desire to further engage with businesses, ISPs and residents.
- **Identify objectives of engagement program.**
 - Present introductory information (conceptual plan, next steps)
 - Listen to questions and concerns, develop a FAQ
 - (please note: future business plan/financial model to answer more detailed questions in Phase 3 engagement)

Related Issues/Decisions:

- **Brief description of previous/related issues or decision that may have bearing on the project.**
 - CBF / Local ISPs with current projects underway
 - A well-planned design to include existing broadband infrastructure
 - Long-term financial strategy
 - Individual connections to the home (contracted vs in-house)
 - Securing a network operator, 24/7 service and operations, take up rates

- Ensuring CRTC standards are met

Scope of Public Participation:

- Clarify the scale and level of engagement anticipated (i.e. inform, consult, involve, collaborate or empower) at the various stages of the consultation process.

PHASE 1

- **COMPLETE**

- Broadband Policy development - Inform
- Broadband demand phone survey of both residents and businesses, completed by Banister Research, to determine satisfaction with existing broadband access and service providers. (2017) - Consult
- Meetings with local ISPs and Telecom companies to discuss future broadband plans and potential partnerships. (2015-2016) - Consult

PHASE 2

1) Inform, Consult and Involve

- Provide fact sheets/introductory information (i.e. policy, conceptual plan and next steps)
 - Via County's traditional communications mediums: website, social media, newsletter.
- Invite Residents stakeholder group to participate in three facilitated public consultations at the Nordegg Public Services Building (May 23, 2018), Leslieville Community Centres (May 28, 2018) and Caroline Hub Facility (May 29, 2018).
- Invite Industry & Businesses stakeholder group to participate in meeting with Council at the Subway Room, Christensen Centre (May 24, 2018)
 - Advertised in local newspapers, website, social media and newsletter.
- Invite Local ISP and Telcom companies to meet with Council (May 24, 2018).
 - Letter to each stakeholder company.
- Online feedback forms
- Website information on project/progress.

2) Involve only

- As part of Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework (ICF) development, invite the Town of Rocky Mountain House, Village of Caroline and Summer Village of Burnstick Lake to meet with Clearwater County Council in 2018/2019.
- Website information on project/progress.

3) Inform only

- As part of Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework (ICF) development, keep municipalities bordering Clearwater County informed on project/progress.
- By way of letter, keep First Nations communities informed on project/progress, as well as potential in future of invite to support broadband funding requests. Meeting May 11 with O'Chiese to discuss infrastructure capital plans.
- By way of letter, keep provincial and federal governments informed on project/progress as well as future funding requests to come.
- Website information on project/progress.

PHASE 3

TBD

Timeframe/Budget:

- Describe the overall timeframe and milestones.
 - Phase 1 Engagement – 3-6 months
 - Three Public Open House – May 23, 28 & 29
 - Two meetings with ISPs/Businesses – May 24
 - Letter to municipal stakeholder groups – 2018.
 - Online feedback forms – 2018.

Engagement Process



- Cost estimate for implementing the plan and process for receiving budget approval.
 - Phase 1 Estimated budget \$20,000.00

Evaluation:

- Measurements of success:
 - Compliance with policy principles
 - Completed within approved budget and timeframe
 - Results used by decision-makers and stakeholders understand how input used
 - Level of stakeholder satisfaction with process and outcomes