

Municipality Of Chatham-Kent

Finance, Budget, Information Technology & Transformation

Information Technology & Transformation

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Catherine Fitzgerald, Director, Information Technology & Transformation

Date: August 7, 2020

Subject: Support for TekSavvy Solutions Inc. Improving Connectivity for Ontario (ICON) Application

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

1. The Municipality of Chatham-Kent provide a letter of support for TekSavvy Solutions Inc. Connectivity for Ontario program (ICON) grant application to build fibre facilities within Chatham-Kent in accordance with a plan presented to Council and Administration in Closed Session. The specific locations are confidential and subject to a non-disclosure agreement and have been shared with Council and the Municipality's administration.

Background

The Ontario government is expanding access to reliable broadband and cellular service in underserved and unserved parts of the province. The application intake for the \$150 million Improving Connectivity for Ontario program (ICON) closes August 21, 2020. This funding will help drive economic investment and job creation across the province, while allowing more people to work from home more efficiently, engage in online learning, and connect with family and friends.

"The outbreak of COVID-19 reinforced the need to improve access to reliable broadband and cellular service as more people work and learn from home in order to practice physical distancing," said Laurie Scott, Minister of Infrastructure at the announcement of this funding opportunity. "By making these investments we will help to ensure every region in the province can participate in the modern digital economy, and contribute to Ontario's economic recovery."

Comments

TekSavvy Solutions Inc. has approached administration with a proposal to apply to the ICON program. The ICON program provides up to 25% provincial funding for approved

projects that provide broadband connectivity speeds of at least 50 megabits per second (Mbps) download and 10 Mbps upload or greater for end users. These projects must cover underserved areas and in Chatham-Kent these are largely areas outside our primary and secondary urban areas. Eligible geographic areas can be viewed in more detail through the [Ontario Broadband Map](#).

TekSavvy has presented administration with a plan for an area of Chatham-Kent to be serviced if this application were successful.

Applicants to the ICON program must demonstrate there is local support for improving connectivity in the project area. Chatham-Kent is able to demonstrate this support through:

- In-kind Engineering permitting for the successful applicant, including streamlined consent and encroachment permit process and field site meetings to determine ideal placement within right-of-way where applicable
- Assistance in gathering letters of support and identifying potential application partners, including local government partners with shared interest and/or joint project areas
- Assistance with professional services including application reviews, GIS analysis, partner identification and consultation
- Assistance analyzing Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED) data for Chatham-Kent, including tasks such as identifying potential anchor institutions
- Identification of municipal resources to support the technical implementation
- Identification of Municipal capital projects which may assist in reducing costs for installing infrastructure. This includes opportunities such as installation of additional conduit during planned capital projects

Areas of Strategic Focus and Critical Success Factors

The recommendations in this report support the following areas of strategic focus:

Economic Prosperity:

Chatham-Kent is an innovative and thriving community with a diversified economy

A Healthy and Safe Community:

Chatham-Kent is a healthy and safe community with sustainable population growth

People and Culture:

Chatham-Kent is recognized as a culturally vibrant, dynamic, and creative community

Environmental Sustainability:

Chatham-Kent is a community that is environmentally sustainable and promotes stewardship of our natural resources

The recommendations in this report support the following critical success factors:

Financial Sustainability:

The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is financially sustainable

Open, Transparent and Effective Governance:

The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is open, transparent and effectively governed with efficient and bold, visionary leadership

Has the potential to support all areas of strategic focus & critical success factors

Neutral issues (does not support negatively or positively)

Consultation

Legal Services have reviewed the proposal.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications of this report. Chatham-Kent is supporting all ISP companies bringing fibre connectivity to the region.

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