

## Report ITR-PCD-01-16

**To:** Chair and Members of Planning and Community Development Committee  
**From:** Geoff Hogan, Information Technology (IT) Director  
**Meeting Date:** December 10, 2015  
**Subject:** **GREAT Network Guiding Principles**  
**Status:** Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution PCD07-16; Endorsed by County Council January 5, 2016 per Resolution CC12-16;

### Recommendation(s)

**WHEREAS improved broadband infrastructure is critical to the future economic well-being of Grey County;**

**AND WHEREAS Grey County supports the Western Ontario Warden's Caucus (WOWC) South West Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) project;**

**AND WHEREAS Grey County is applying to the New Building Canada Small Communities Fund (NBCF-SCF) for support to build additional fibre-optic infrastructure in Grey County that aligns with SWIFT project vision;**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT report ITR-PCD-01-16 be received;**

**AND THAT the following guiding principles be adopted by Grey County to guide the development of local broadband improvements:**

- 1. Standards-Based Architecture**
- 2. High Availability and Scalability**
- 3. Neutrality and Open Access**
- 4. Ubiquity and Equitability**
- 5. Competition and Affordability**

## 6. Sustainability and Transparency

### 7. Service Level Agreement;

**AND FURTHER THAT the project be branded the Grey Regional Area Telecom (GREAT) Network for marketing purposes.**

## Background

Access to high quality broadband in Grey County varies based on the community, some have excellent access (Hanover) while most other urban areas are reasonable for today's needs but do not have the capacity or scalability for the near future. Rural areas typically lag far behind urban areas and only have access to relatively slow and less reliable wireless technologies or satellite. The need for better broadband is increasing rapidly and in order to be viable and prosper in today's global economy, communities and regions must have the tools to grow their economies from within so they can compete for investment on the global stage.

Grey County has taken a significant leadership role in the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus (WOWC) South West Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) project by allowing the County Information Technology (IT) Director to act as the SWIFT staff technical lead. SWIFT is a much needed long term, sustainable plan to improve broadband in south west Ontario but it is a long term solution and does not address the immediate local needs in Grey County. The recently released Economic Development Strategy indicates that developing shortened timelines and accelerating the implementation of Grey's Broadband Plan is an important part of ensuring key infrastructure is in place to make sure Grey is investment ready.

### *Connect it Your Way – Broadband Study*

In late 2014, staff commissioned a study by a consultant to help identify options for the County to facilitate broadband expansion in the County. The [Connect it your way broadband study](#) identifies public sector approaches from around Canada for improving broadband. The study also describes potential governance approaches that the County could use if the county chooses to proceed with local investments in broadband. The study does not recommend an approach at this time because there is more information required before a recommendation can be made. One of the primary unknowns that must be identified prior to a recommendation being made is the location of the fibre assets in the County. SWIFT has clearly articulated that fibre is the technology that should be funded in any government programs. Any investments made into broadband infrastructure must be done strategically with no duplication of existing provider infrastructure where possible.

To collect meaningful data on the state of provider infrastructure the County has released a Request for Pre-Qualification (RFPQ) requesting data that stipulates that vendors can only bid on future Request for Proposals (RFP's) if they participate in the RFPQ. The RFPQ will specifically ask the vendors for the location of their fibre-optic infrastructure and other pertinent data. Once the data is collected and analyzed by the staff and consultants a report will come forward to council with final recommendations prior to an RFP being released.

The name SWIFT has really helped market the regional broadband project for the WOWC, to help with the marketing of the local project it is being recommended that a name be given to the local project. Grey Regional Area Telecom (GREAT) Network is the name being recommended.

## Guiding Principles

The WOWC adopted a set of guiding principles to help guide staff with the SWIFT project. It is recommended that Grey County also adopt these principles to help guide the local project and keep the County aligned with the regional SWIFT project. The suggested principles are:

1. **Standards-Based Architecture:** The Telecommunications Network will be built upon published open standards so as to ensure interoperability with all other systems and provide ease of support.
2. **High Availability and Scalability:** GREAT is available at any moment in time, wherever users need it, any time they need it, and the system has the capacity to scale to accommodate all user connections and applications dynamically without significant additional capital outlays or system delays.
3. **Neutrality and Open Access:** There are no barriers to entry for users and third-party providers to access each other. The playing field is level, meaning there are facilities, contractual mechanisms, published rates, and oversight in place to ensure access is open to all users and third-party providers.
4. **Ubiquity and Equitability:** Ubiquity means physical accessibility of the network to *everyone*, and equitability means costs are the same for everyone to provide applications and services over the system or use applications and services on the system regardless of geographic point of ingress/egress.
5. **Competition and Affordability:** The system and processes promote competition in services and applications by providing open access, flat rates, high-availability, and a differentiated system that supports multiple Classes of Service (CoS) and Quality of Service (QoS) for all applications that require it. More competition between providers leads to better services and lower prices for everyone.

6. Sustainability and Transparency: All users pay fees to access the network and fees are published and publically available. These fees provide the necessary cash flow in support of ongoing operational and capital expenditures to ensure the network is not dependent on ongoing taxpayer subsidies. Surplus cash, if any, is reinvested in infrastructure to expand network coverage, upgrade capacity, improve operational efficiencies and increase customer satisfaction as well lower rates. At a minimum, the chosen network model is to be a “full cost recovery model.”
7. Service Level Agreement: The network is covered by meaningful Service Level Agreements to ensure accountability to the foregoing guiding principle attributes and service levels.

## Financial / Staffing / Legal / Information Technology (IT)

### Considerations

There are no specific issues with this report.

### Link to Strategic Goals / Priorities

Goal Number One of the Corporate Strategic Plan is to expand the prosperity base of the County. This means enhancing and diversifying economic opportunities within the County, becoming “investment- ready” and ensuring the foundation is in place for sustained success. Our shared vision of sustained community and regional prosperity encompasses:

### Attachments

Background Reports:

[Connect it your way broadband study](#)

Respectfully submitted by,

Geoff Hogan

Director of Information Technology