

Report ITR-CC-01-15

To: County Council
From: Geoff Hogan
Meeting Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2014
Subject: **Support of Western Ontario Warden's Caucus Funding
Application for South West Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT)
high speed broadband initiative**
Status: Recommendation adopted by County Council as presented per
Resolution CC14-15;

Recommendation(s)

WHEREAS Grey County has been providing ongoing financial and human resource support of the South West Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) high speed broadband initiative since its inception in 2012;

AND WHEREAS Grey County Council adopted Resolution CS98-14, strongly supporting the Western Ontario Warden's Caucus (WOWC) funding application, which was endorsed at the November 25, 2014 session of Grey County Council;

AND WHEREAS within Resolution CS98-14 it was requested that the incoming Grey County Council also pass a resolution of support for the submission of an application of funding under the Small Communities Fund by the WOWC;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Report ITR-CC-01-15 be received;

AND THAT Grey County Council support the submission of an application of funding under the Small Communities Fund by the WOWC for funding to assist with the South West Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) high speed broadband initiative.

Background

As noted in Report CAOR-CC-07-14, the WOWC commissioned a study into the state of broadband service in Southwestern Ontario. The study found Southwestern Ontario to be far behind other regions in Ontario, across Canada and around the world for availability of and access to affordable high capacity broadband internet service.

Subsequently, the SWIFT project was initiated and managed by Grey County Director of Information Technology, Geoff Hogan and then Grey County CAO, Lance Thurston along with the firm of Campbell Patterson Communications. The steering committee was comprised of Duncan McKinlay, Past Warden, Grey County (Chair) as well as representatives from several municipal councils in Southwestern Ontario and industry representatives including The Southwest Economic Alliance, Middlesex Hospital Alliance, Universities of Windsor and Guelph, and the Waterloo Region District School Board. Financial and human resources support has been provided by Grey County toward this initiative since its onset.

The WOWC submitted an Expression of Interest for the Small Communities Fund requesting funding to implement a regional fibreoptic network. The attached response from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs advises that the project proposal has been selected to move forward to the application phase, the deadline for which is December 19, 2014 at 5:00 PM. One of the requirements of the application is a resolution of support of the project by a municipality.

Financial / Staffing / Legal / Information Technology

Considerations

There are no financial ramifications associated with providing written support of a funding application to the Western Ontario Warden's Caucus.

If this application were to be successful, in order to access and leverage upper levels of government funding, financial contributions will be required. While the WOWC has not established an official formula for municipal contributions, it has been suggested by the WOWC that Grey County, beginning in 2015, prepare for estimated annual contribution of \$216,000. This would provide a total contribution of \$1,080,000 over five years.

It is acknowledged that the WOWC's SWIFT initiative is long term meaning as far out as 20 years and does not cover what is known as the last mile where the population densities are low and the rate of return on investment is also low. A study is currently being undertaken to determine how Grey County can move forward in a complimentary manner to facilitate a faster roll out within the county. A report will be brought forward for consideration early in 2015.

Link to Strategic Goals / Priorities

Support of the WOWC funding application is contiguous with goal 4.5 of the Corporate Strategic plan: Champion a broadband initiative for Western Ontario that will improve telecommunications in underserved areas, thereby improving connections to services and economic opportunities within Grey County and the region.

This initiative supports Council's overarching goal of expanding the property base (Goal 1) as reliable high speed internet access is crucial to the success of businesses.

Attachments

November 6, 2014 letter from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to the Western Ontario Warden's Caucus.

[ITR-PCD-05-14 Intelligent County and Broadband Initiative](#)

[CAOR-CC-07-14 WOWC SWIFT Time Commitment](#)

Respectfully submitted by,

Kathie Nunno
Clerk's Department

Geoff Hogan
Director of Information Technology

Director Sign Off: *Geoff Hogan*

Ministry of Agriculture,
Food and Rural Affairs

Ministère de l'Agriculture, de
l'Alimentation et
des Affaires rurales



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Rural Programs Branch

November 6th, 2014

Our File: SCF-0344

Geoff Hogan, Director IT
Western Ontario Warden's Caucus
595 9th Avenue East,
Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 3E3
geoff.hogan@grey.ca

Dear Geoff Hogan:

Re: Invitation to Submit Application for the Building Canada Fund - Small Communities Fund (SCF)

Thank you for your Expression of Interest on behalf of the Western Ontario Warden's Caucus for the SCF.

We are pleased to inform you that your project proposal has been selected to move forward to the application phase of the SCF. For your proposed connectivity and broadband project, please ensure that the estimated costs of this project are based on accurate and reliable sector specific information and analysis. Also, note that the communities benefiting from this project must have populations less than 100,000. Given the complexity and scope of this project, I encourage you to work with Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure officials as you work to develop your application.

Please note that an invitation to the application phase does not guarantee approval of funding.

The application form is attached. You will have until Friday, December 19, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. (EST) to complete the application form and return it to the Ministry. Please quote your file number, SCF-0344, in the subject line. The completed application must be accompanied by the appropriate documentation as noted below:

- All proponents must include a copy of the application and appropriate technical schedule(s).
- Municipalities or local services boards must supply a copy of their comprehensive asset management plan (including projects submitted by a private sector body if the municipality is providing financial support). Please note, these documents are not required if they were previously submitted for the formula-based component of the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund.



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- Private Sector Bodies (for profit and not-for profit) and First Nation applicants must include a council resolution from a local municipality (or municipalities) in support of the project in order for the application to be considered complete.
- Any other relevant or requested supporting documentation that provides evidence of technical merit and/or economic benefit (i.e., economic sustainability plans, etc.).

Small Communities Fund Timelines	
Application submission deadline	December 19, 2014
Ontario to recommend a final project list to the federal government for review. A review will take place through a joint Oversight Committee (Canada and Ontario) and projects will be recommended for approval to the federal government.	February 2015 (estimated)
Funding decisions announced (as federal approvals are received)	Beginning March-April 2015 (estimated)

Any required aboriginal consultations on the project should be done prior to the start of the project. Successful applicants will be tasked to submit preliminary information on ongoing or potential aboriginal consultations.

Successful municipalities and local services boards will be required to obtain a council/board resolution or municipal by-law to execute the project level contribution agreement with the province.

A program objective is for approved projects to be completed within five years. This will be outlined in the contribution agreement, based on project description and construction schedules.

To assist with filling out the application, we have arranged an online/telephone information seminar. An appointment will be sent out shortly and will include all of the pertinent information. We encourage you to attend this seminar.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call the Contact Centre at 1-877-424-1300 or email SCF@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,



Joel Locklin
Manager (A), Program Operations

Attachment: application template