

CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, January 14, 2021

2:00 p.m.

Meeting to be held electronically.

Agenda

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Adoption of December 17, 2020 Minutes
3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof
4. Planning Session #1: Made In Elgin Solution to Elgin's Connectivity Challenges, Chief Administrative Officer
5. Correspondence – Kristi Rockley's Answers to the Internet Connectivity Survey
6. Date of Next Meeting
7. Adjournment

Meeting: Connectivity Committee
Date: December 17, 2020
Time: 2:00 p.m.
Location: Webex

Attendees: Tom Marks, Warden and Committee Chair
Dominique Giguère, Councillor and Committee Vice Chair
Justin Pennings, Community Member
Mike Andrews, Community Member

Regrets: Joshua Kiirya, Community Member
Shawn Southern, Community Member

Staff: Julie Gonyou, Chief Administrative Officer
Jim Bundschuh, Director of Financial Services
Cecil Coxen, IT Manager – Township of Malahide
Katherine Thompson, Supervisor of Legislative Services
Carolyn Krahn, Legislative Services Coordinator

DRAFT MINUTES

1. Call to Order

The Connectivity Committee met this 17th day of December, 2020. The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved by: Justin Pennings
Seconded by: Mike Andrews

RESOLVED THAT the agenda be approved as presented.

Recorded Vote

	Yes	No
Councillor Giguère	Yes	
Mike Andrews	Yes	

Justin Pennings	Yes	
Warden Marks	Yes	
	4	0

- Motion Carried.

3. Adoption of November 19, 2020 Minutes

Moved by: Mike Andrews

Seconded by: Councillor Giguère

Resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting be adopted.

Recorded Vote

	Yes	No
Councillor Giguère	Yes	
Warden Mennill	Yes	
Justin Pennings	Yes	
Councillor Marks	Yes	
	4	0

- Motion Carried.

4. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

None.

5. Summary and Highlights: Canada’s Rural and Remote Broadband Conference Fall 2020 – Councillor Giguère, Vice Chair

Councillor Giguère presented a summary of Canada’s Rural and Remote Broadband Conference Fall 2020. The Conference was divided into two (2) streams, policy and technical, and Councillor Giguère and the Manager of IT attended the following sessions:

- The New COVID Reality Technical and Policy Impacts on Rural Canada
- Connectivity doesn’t have to be a contest: Alternative Funding Models
- The Good, The Bad and The Ugly Part 2 Becoming a Community ISP
- International Community Models, Lessons for Canada

- Fibre to the Home 101 – Network Overview
- Broadband Gap Analysis Identifying the Size of the Problem
- Innovative Micro-Projects for Sustainable Broadband
- Beyond Connectivity Bridging the Digital Divide

6. Summary #2 of Mountain Connect Virtual Conference, Legislative Services Coordinator

The Legislative Services Coordinator provided a summary of the Mountain Connect Conference, which included sessions focusing on three distinct tracks: Community Development, Emerging Technologies, and Wireless. The second report on the Conference provided a summary of the following two (2) sessions: Digital Government Strategy in the Age of COVID and San Mateo County's Approach to Digital Equity and E-Learning.

7. Discussion Question Feedback – Internet Forum – Supervisor of Legislative Services

The Supervisor of Legislative Services presented the feedback gathered from participants during the breakout sessions of the Elgin County Internet Forum, hosted by the Connectivity Committee on December 3, 2020.

8. Correspondence – A Path to Better Connectivity – ROMA Launches Municipal Broadband Resources

The Committee received the correspondence from the Rural Ontario Municipal Association.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee will meet again on January 14, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. for a working session to develop an inventory of what has been done and compare it to the roadmap in the ROMA Broadband Resource Package.

10. Adjournment

Moved by: Justin Pennings

Seconded by: Mike Andrews

RESOLVED THAT the meeting be adjourned at 2:31 p.m.

Recorded Vote

	Yes	No
Councillor Giguère	Yes	
Warden Mennill	Yes	
Justin Pennings	Yes	
Councillor Marks	Yes	
	4	0

- Motion Carried.



Planning Session #1:
Made In Elgin Solution to
Elgin's Connectivity Challenges

Elgin County Connectivity Committee

January 14, 2020





ROMA: Broadband Connectivity A Municipal Roadmap

<https://www.roma.on.ca/ROMA-Docs/Reports/2020/BroadbandConnectivityAMunicipalRoadmap.aspx>

Purpose & Background

The Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) has developed a Municipal Connectivity roadmap for municipal elected officials and staff. It includes tangible steps and initiatives for Councils to consider and implement to improve connectivity if they so choose.

- Regulatory and funding roles for telecommunications fall primarily with the federal and provincial governments
- Investing in connectivity remains a choice at the municipal level because local governments do not have a mandated role in telecommunications
- pressure to find a solution is increasing
 - Connectivity in Elgin - Survey (434 responses)
 - "Connected communities are more likely to have economic prosperity, recover faster and compete in a global market" (p.4)





The Roadmap

Components – Municipal Plan

Learn the Basics

- Read *Primer and Roadmap*

Assess Local Needs

- Assess "current state" of connectivity (what exists now, where it is located, what future infrastructure plans exist)
- Establish a working group (Committee)
- Map layers of connectivity
- Understand "drivers" and be open for creative solutions

Evaluate Possible Roles

- Refer to Figure 2: Spectrum of Broadband Options (next slide)
- Determine where on the Spectrum you wish to be

Leverage Existing Tools

- Evaluate Best Practices
- Use and leverage potential tools municipal governments already have to manage connectivity needs

Champion Connectivity

- Create a compelling narrative and use data to drive the business case for why building connectivity is important.

Invest Strategically & Look for Partnership

Refer to pages 8 and 9 of this document.



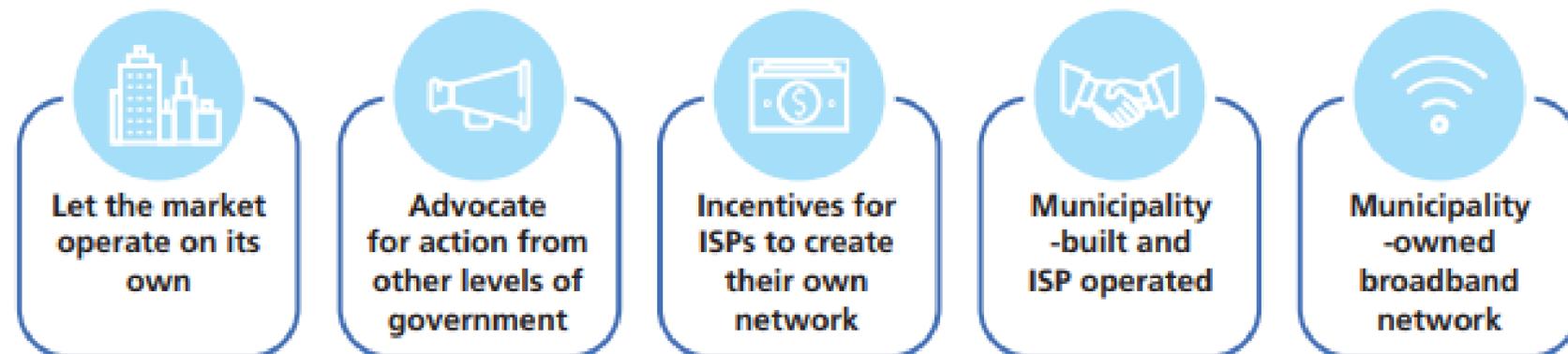
Spectrum

Component 3

Determine what role, if any, your municipality wants to play in connectivity.

There are many roles that municipal governments can play in broadband connectivity. The framework below sets up the spectrum of possible options.³

Figure 2: Spectrum of Broadband Options (Erin Britnell, 2020)



On one end is the option to let the market operate on its own, which is what has largely existed. At the other end is for the municipal government to own and operate its own broadband network. In between are the options to advocate for action from other levels of government, create incentives for TSPs and ISPs to create their own networks, and the last is to build a network and let a TSP or ISP operate it.

Accessed on January 7, 2020 from ROMA: <https://www.roma.on.ca/ROMA-Docs/Reports/2020/BroadbandConnectivityAMunicipalRoadmap.aspx>

Key Questions:

- Where on the Spectrum do you want to be?
- Is there enough digital literacy and capacity to build, maintain and sustain such a system at the municipal level?
- Are there economies of scale that can be leveraged to build enough demand that ISPs would be interested?
- What level of control and risk would you recommend Council assume?

Advice (ROMA Roadmap P.8 & 9):

It is important that municipal governments do not assume that the problem will be solved entirely for them by the provincial and federal governments, or the private sector. That means that although connectivity is not a core municipal service, all municipal governments ought to understand the role that they want to play - and to **be realistic about how difficult it may be to maintain.**

Be honest about the level of digital capacity and resources available.



Financial Options

ROMA Roadmap - Page 10

Broadband Levy

- Municipal Councils can approve the establishment of an annual broadband tax levy (Town of Caledon)
- The key is for Council to determine what financial tools can be used to help incentivize private ISPs to the community.

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Managing and Protecting Municipal Assets

- **"Dig once" policy:** requires the construction of fibre-optic conduit as part of any construction project.
- **Municipal Access Agreements (MAA):** most widely used tool to grant consent and set the terms for individual carriers to access the municipal rights-of-way and put in wireline connections
 - Federation of Canadian Municipalities has established a committee on Rights-of-Way. ROMA encourages local governments to contact them directly for additional details about agreements.
- **Streamline existing processes** create new policies to support ISPs as they navigate through municipal laws and regulations.





Champion the need

ROMA Roadmap - Page 11

- Create a compelling narrative and use data to drive the business case for why building connectivity is important.

Important facts for the community to have ready include:

- Number of households and communities that are currently not served or are served, but not reliably
- Areas or neighbourhoods that are priorities to build new connectivity (e.g. low-income, social housing)
- What local schools, hospitals, long-term care homes, children's aid societies and police services are not connected
- What assets already exist that the new connectivity could be attached to
- what Partnerships the municipality has, or are in the works

Advocacy should be ongoing.



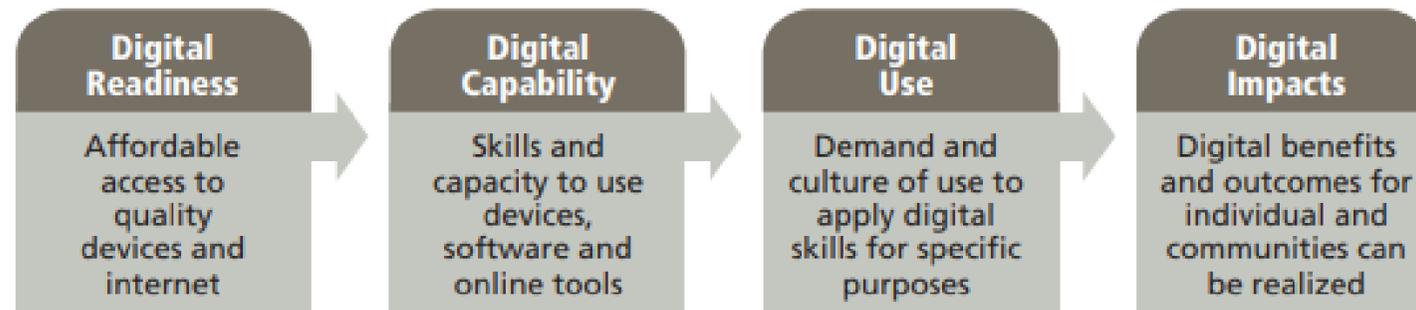
Building Digital Capacity

Building Digital Capacity

The advocacy piece is one part of a larger puzzle. That is, connectivity must be sustainable no matter the path chosen. Public funding will certainly help with capital costs, but operating costs and upgrade campaigns will need to be considered.

To that end, communities should be working to improve the digital literacy both within the municipality and across the community. One way to do this is to adopt a “digital readiness” strategy.⁶ This will make sure that the skills and capacity necessary to use the devices, software and online tools will be possible once access to quality devices and the internet is available and adopted.

Figure 3: Digital Readiness Roadmap (Kelly, 2020)



Once the capability is created, digital use is important. That involves building the demand and culture of use to apply digital skills for specific purposes. Together the combination will allow for individual and communities to realize the digital benefits and outcomes that public funding has helped build.

Next Steps:

- use local data to identify gaps in connectivity and connect them to the lost opportunities for your communities
- identify local champions
- leverage power of your associations (provincial, regional and local)
- meet with MPs and MPPs to advocate
- work to build digital capacity and advocate for systems that enhance digital inclusion and are viable and sustainable for end users.

Invest in "shovel-worthy" projects



ROMA Roadmap - Page 13

- Advocating for more public sector funding is a longer-term advocacy strategy
- In the short-term, local governments should focus on identifying strategic and "shovel-worthy" projects.
- These projects may not be "shovel-ready" now but could be built into a business case with support from neighbouring municipalities
- **Public funding will track behind the technological advancements available (Council should consider whether the investment made is being done in a way that is scalable and future-proofed).**





Partner, partner, partner

ROMA Roadmap - Page 13

- Partner with neighbouring municipal governments, local institutions, and public sector organizations to build a case for connectivity demand (i.e. economies of scale)
- Relationship building with ISPs in the community is also useful
- Create a line of communication between TSPs, ISPs, and LDCs (when the business case is further along)
- Reach out to existing municipal groups for advice on template Requests for Information, Requests for Proposals, etc.





Discussion:
Next
Steps



Dec 27, 2020

Attn: Councillor Tom Marks
tmarks@elgin.ca

Dear Councillor Tom Marks and Whomever else it may concern,

My name is Kristi Rockley, and I am a resident of Bayham Township in Elgin County. I have lived here since 2009. I did not hear about the survey that you were conducting this fall in regard to internet connectivity, and just found it this week as I was again attempting to search for answers to my ongoing internet issues. I would gladly answer questions and be a part of survey and or anything else to assist in attempting to get reasonable service to this region.

Where I live [REDACTED], Eastlink has always had the monopoly on the service. When I built my home and business here in 2009, I had them installed. At that time, I was told that I had to also pay for a working landline telephone service, even though I didn't want it and never plugged a phone in. They told me that it was a necessity for their service. A couple years later, after being hit by lightning, a technician came to repair my line and told me that the only reason I was paying for a phone line was due to the fact they didn't have a billing process that separated phone and internet. When I confronted them with that, they said it was true, the technician should not have said anything, they agreed to cancel the landline, but not pay me back for the previous excess billing. Being the only ISP in the region, I could do nothing else about it.

My internet, which is for residential and small business purposes, has always been very bad and I have spoken to them many times. My line drops continuously, Wifi is so weak it can't work in the same room as the modem-router. I try to use Wifi calling on my Cell phone and can't get connected or drop connection routinely. I miss many calls coming in and have recently had health & medical professionals drop me as a patient because they can't get a hold of me. (Cell tower connection is another issue, but this is due to WiFi connection in my home too.)

Recently, I again plugged in my computer directly to the modem to test my download-upload speed and found I was at between 1-4 for download and 0.1-1ish for upload. I have purchased the only package Eastlink told me was possible at my address. This most basic package costs me \$88.95/ month + \$11.57 HST. When I called Eastlink in Dec to again inquire about what could be done about this slow speed, I was told that the maximum I would be able to achieve on my line was a download rate of 8 mbps, and there is nothing they are going to do to do about it. They told me my 1-4 would be as good as it gets here. They would not drop the price or deal with the old infrastructure lines and make improvements.

In looking at the survey question and results, I will respond to the questions as they pertain to me.

Q1-Municipality: Municipality of Bayham

Q2-Address: [REDACTED]

Q3-Service Provider: Eastlink – DSL (through phone line)

Q4-Rate service with ISP: Data Allowance-1/ Reliability-1/ Affordability-1/ Speed-1/ Overall Experience-1

Q5-Other Connectivity Options: Where I live there were no other options. I looked recently at Explornet and satellite but if there is bad weather I lose all connection possibilities -so did not see it as a viable option. I have also heard of bad experiences with the satellite. They were not willing to have someone come out to tell me if LTE would work here, without me paying a \$75 service charge. I am left without options.

Q6-Monthly Cost of Internet Service: \$88.95+\$11.57(HST)

Q7-Daily Activities on Internet: Downloading-Streaming Video/ E-Commerce / Education (not daily but regularly – few times a week) / Email / Employment / Internet Browsing / Social Networking / Telephone / (Not the last two daily – VPN occasionally)

Q8-Average number of connected devices: 2-3 daily (must be 1 at a time or connection freezes-crashes)- need to be able to do up to 20+ (if people here for business and their cell connection fails due to lack of cell towers)

Q9-Current challenges with Internet: unreliable – not good connectivity – always disconnects; videos won't play smoothly; can only use 1 device at a time or the second cuts out; speed – always super slow 1-4mbps with max potential of 8mbps according to provider; price expensive for what I am able to get and price increases regularly even though my service connection is only a fraction of what I am paying for mbps – wifi distance not even reliably available in the room with the modem – no options for other providers Eastlink is the only option, and not even willing to give price according to max available mbps on the physical line -paying same price as those getting reliable connection at high speeds– bad customer service – dropped wifi calls – due to lack of connection I have lost business - my health is suffering as medical professionals are discharging me due to not being able to contact me especially through this pandemic-weather effects

Q10-Internet Performance Test through CIRA: (hardwired in) download 1.2 (sometimes less) upload 0.6

Q11-Additional Comments: I look forward to being able to have reliable internet

Q12-email address: [REDACTED]

Q13-Able to Contribute to connectivity solution: not sure I have anything I am able to contribute

If you have any further questions or need further clarification, please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED].

Thank you for addressing this ongoing problem!

Kristi Rockley