

To: Economic and Development Services Committee

From: Warren Munro, HBA, RPP, Commissioner,
Economic and Development Services Department

Report Number: ED-22-204

Date of Report: November 23, 2022

Date of Meeting: November 28, 2022

Subject: Broadband Infrastructure in Columbus and Raglan

Ward: Ward 1

File: 03-05

1.0 Purpose

On September 26, 2022, City Council considered Item DS-22-195 and passed the following motion:

“That staff prepare a report for Council to advise Oshawa residents on the timing of High Speed Internet being brought to the underserved communities and farm areas north of Highway 407 in Oshawa.”

The purpose of this Report is to respond to the above direction of City Council.

Confidential Attachment 1 is a copy of an update from the Region of Durham on the Region of Durham Broadband Infrastructure project.

Confidential Attachment 2 is a copy of mapping from the Region of Durham indicating the Proposed Broadband Infrastructure for Columbus and Raglan.

Confidential Attachment 3 is a copy of closed correspondence sent by Mayor Carter, as authorized by Council’s approval of Closed Item DS-21-47, in support of a private sector proposal for 600 to 650 underserved homes in the Northwood Business Park and the rural area of Oshawa.

Attachment 4 is a copy of mapping provided by Rogers Communications Inc. showing the internet service area for a cell tower proposed in 2015.

Attachment 5 is a copy of mapping provided by Rogers Communications Inc. showing the internet service area for the cell tower located at 65 Raglan Road East.

2.0 Recommendation

That the Economic and Development Services Committee recommend to City Council:

1. That Report DS-22-204 providing an update on the timing of the High Speed Internet to underserved communities and farm areas north of Highway 407 be received for information; and,
2. That a copy of Report DS-22-204 be forwarded to the Region of Durham; and,
3. That a copy of only the public portion of Report DS-22-204 be forwarded to the Oshawa Power and Utilities Corporation and Rogers Communications Inc.

3.0 Executive Summary

Not applicable.

4.0 Input From Other Sources

- Durham Broadband
- Region of Durham (Durham OneNet Inc.)
- Rogers Communications Inc. (“Rogers”)
- SpectraPoint

5.0 Analysis

5.1 Background

In 2018, Oshawa City Council endorsed Report [DS-18-162](#) “Broadband Strategy”. There are two action items within the strategy that relate to services in the rural areas of Oshawa:

- Action 5: Work with Oshawa Power and Utilities Corporation (O.P.U.C.) to extend its Fibre Backbone to under-served areas such as employment areas including the Stevenson Industrial Park, Northwood Business Park and Highway 407 employment area and the Riocan commercial centre and Columbus and Raglan.
- Action 7: Collaborate with the Region of Durham to include rural Oshawa as part of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission’s rural programming and support any funding application they may make and request the Region to address rural broadband issues in its Broadband Strategy.

5.2 Update on Actions 5 and 7 of the Broadband Strategy

5.2.1 Action 5 Update

In 2019, Durham Regional Council endorsed Number [2019-P-3](#) – Connecting Our Communities; A Broadband Strategy for the Region of Durham. On page 3 of the Region's strategy, the following is noted:

- **The Challenge:** Broadband services are deployed based on market demand, and supported by business case analyses by Internet Service Providers (I.S.P.s). Therefore, areas with lower customer densities, like rural areas and employment areas, may have limited service options and service speeds. This is because there is not a sufficient cost-benefit motivation for I.S.P.s to upgrade existing infrastructure.
- **The Region's Role:** The Region is not an I.S.P. The Region's efforts should support the expansion of broadband infrastructure.

City staff concur with the comments of the Region. Like the Region, the City is not an I.S.P. but can take a role in advocacy and support private sector proposals to provide internet access in rural areas.

In that regard, on March 8, 2021, the Development Services Committee authorized Mayor Carter to provide a letter in support of an application under the Universal Broadband Fund (see Confidential Attachment 3).

5.2.2 Action 7 Update

City of Oshawa staff, in alignment with Action 7 noted in Section 5.1 of this Report, have provided letters of support for funding applications and have continued to work closely with the newly formed Durham OneNet Inc. (see Number [2021-COW-32](#)) to ensure the needs of this community are considered at the forefront of their Backbone Project. Further details regarding the planned serviced areas can be found in Confidential Attachments 1 and 2 of this Report.

5.3 Rogers Telecommunication Tower

City staff have worked with SpectraPoint and Rogers to understand the prevalence of communications towers in the City of Oshawa and the services that can be extended as part of the telecommunication tower infrastructure. Each telecommunication tower includes network access points that provide access to the internet. Large scale internet service providers (such as Rogers and Bell Mobility) offer home internet service to customers of their wireless divisions. Customers who access these services can obtain a modem for home use, providing internet access with computers that do not have the correct components installed.

Report DS-15-04 dated January 7, 2015 which included a proposed telecommunications tower and related equipment by Rogers at 255 Columbus Road East, amongst other sites, was referred back to Economic and Development Services staff for further review and the preparation of a subsequent report and recommendation. Several pieces of

correspondence were received from residents in the vicinity of 255 Columbus Road East speaking in opposition of the infrastructure.

Owing in part to the opposition from residents to the tower which would have provided internet services, on May 12, 2015, City staff received Correspondence [DS-15-121](#) from Rogers that a decision was made to withdraw the application for a new tower at 255 Columbus Road East.

The installation of this telecommunications tower could have provided the opportunity for residents in this area to receive wireless internet services through major internet providers through the modem for home use arrangement detailed above. A map of the potential serviced area can be found in Attachment 4.

Following the decision to withdraw the application, Planning Services staff advocated with Rogers to find an alternative site. In December of 2019, City Council reviewed Item DS-19-212 and approved a 50 metre (164 ft.) monopole tower which provides internet service to the surrounding area as shown on Attachment 5.

5.4 Durham Broadband

Durham Broadband, an entity under O.P.U.C. began formally delivering Fibre internet services in the Oshawa area in 2021. City staff have advocated with the O.P.U.C. to include internet service in the rural areas. However, at present Durham Broadband is focused strictly on providing Fibre internet services to commercial and business enterprise customers and is not yet servicing residential customers. Further, there are no immediate Backbone expansion plans being brought forward in the 2022-2023 servicing plans for Durham Broadband that would expand Fibre internet service to the Columbus and Raglan Communities.

5.5 Staff Comments

In the absence of I.S.P.s establishing Fibre Backbone projects in rural areas of the City, and Durham Broadband servicing primarily commercial and business enterprises as opposed to residential, the opportunity for residents in the Columbus and Raglan area are contingent on the Backbone project roll-out being led by Durham OneNet Inc. (Region of Durham).

In the time until the Fibre infrastructure is constructed, residents in this area can gain access to various wireless and digital subscriber line (D.S.L.) services. These services can be accessed through large internet service providers or smaller companies that work off of the telecommunication tower access points in the community.

City staff continue to emphasize the immediate need for equitable and high-speed Fibre internet services in the Columbus and Raglan communities to Durham OneNet Inc. to ensure the residents in this community receive adequate servicing within phase one of the Backbone Project commencement.

It should be understood that Durham OneNet Inc. is not a direct to home internet service provider, and is strictly focused on expanding the Fibre infrastructure to underserved

communities in the Durham Region. At the point where the Fibre Backbone is constructed, direct to home internet service providers will have the available infrastructure to connect to and deliver services into the home of residents in these communities.

6.0 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications related to this Report.

7.0 Relationship to the Oshawa Strategic Plan

The Recommendation in this Report advances the Accountable Leadership and Economic Prosperity and Financial Stewardship goals of the Oshawa Strategic Plan.



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Economic and Development Services Department

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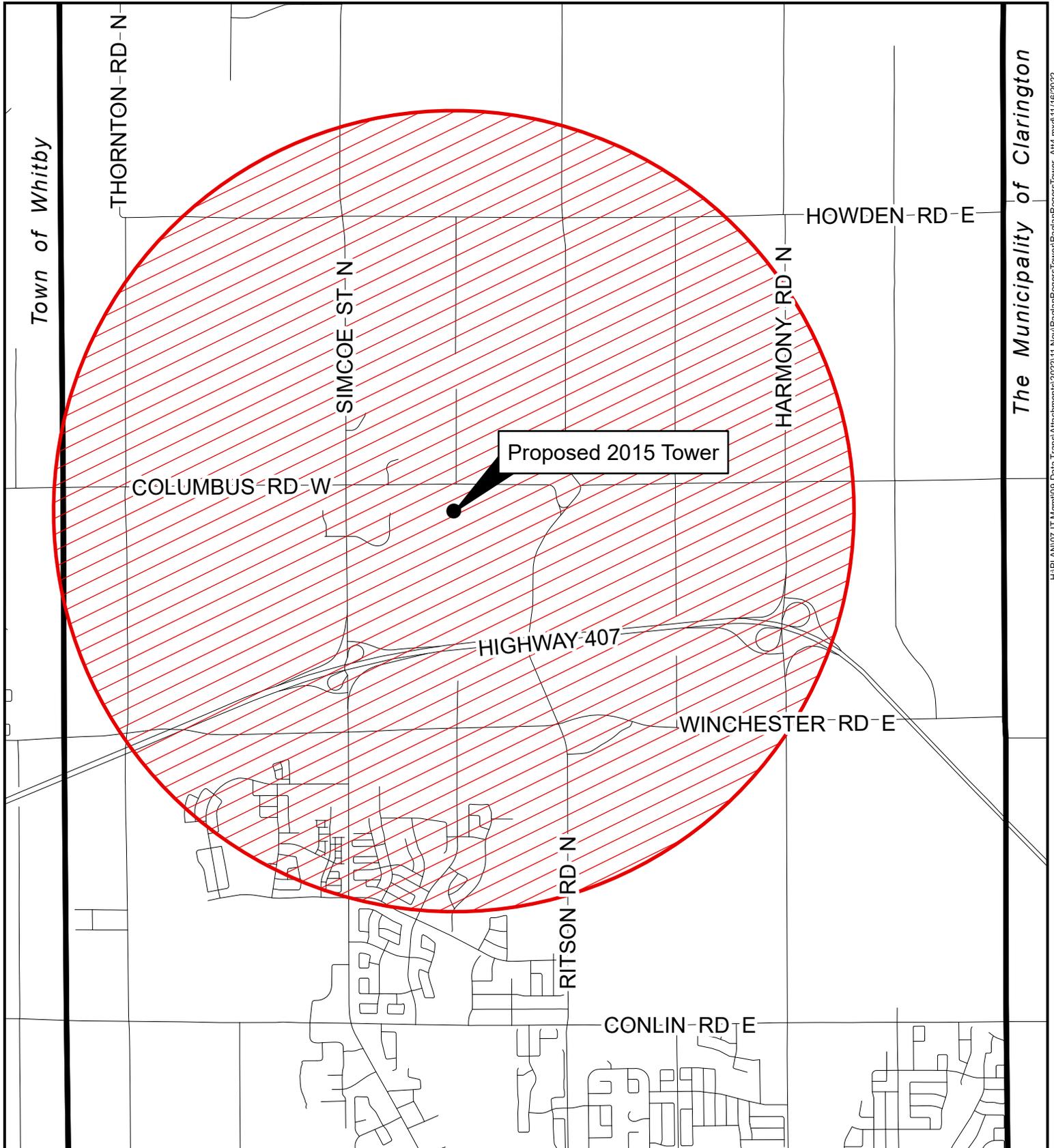
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 Service Area as Indicated
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