



CITY OF ST. ALBERT ADMINISTRATIVE BACKGROUNDER

REMOVE REFERENCE TO CITY AS POTENTIAL INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER AND TO OPTION WITHIN FUTURE REVIEW

On September 6, 2016, Councillor Mackay provided notice in accordance with Section 23 of Procedure Bylaw 35/2009 of intent to bring forward the following motion:

That the Smart City Master Plan be amended to remove any reference to the City as a local internet service provider, and that Administration discontinue reviews of this potential broadband delivery option through the requested report on community broadband options in 2017.

On September 6, 2016, Councillor Hughes provided notice in accordance with Section 23 of Procedure Bylaw 35/2009 of intent to bring forward the following motion:

That sections related to the city developing an Internet service provider company be removed from the master plan.

BACKGROUND:

This backgrounder is a response to both motions as the responses are relevant to both.

If either motion is carried by Council, Administration would remove reference to the City as a local Internet service provider (ISP) within the context sections of the proposed Smart City Master Plan, and Administration would discontinue reviews of this potential broadband delivery option through the requested report on community broadband options in 2017.

Removal of specific reference to the ISP or ownership would not have a material effect on other strategies within the plan.

The proposed Smart City Master Plan does not specifically recommend that the City to establish itself as a local ISP, or to form an organization to deliver Internet services in competition with existing providers. The Master Plan recommends that all options be looked at and considered as possible ways to achieve the stated goal. Municipalities across Canada have taken a variety of approaches based upon what's right for them.

Within Strategy B.1.3, a context section provides some options that the City may wish to investigate relative to the needs of local business areas. In June 2016 Council also discussed community broadband options, including approaches to take no action, partnering with the private sector, providing open network access to service providers, operating broadband network infrastructure as an ISP, or establishing a separate entity to delivery local internet services over City networks. These options are consistent with what other municipalities have chosen to investigate or pursue.

In St. Albert, a review is underway for Council's consideration of these options in Q2 2017. Consideration of all options will provide Council with a fuller understanding of available approaches and their implications. The Smart City Master Plan does not endorse a particular option. No action will be taken relative to community broadband delivery until after Council direction is received. Should Council support the motion to eliminate the ISP or ownership model from the options review, Administration will bring forward only a review of the remaining options.

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