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Presented by: Lynette Tremblay, Manager, Intergovernmental Affairs

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Federation of Canadian Municipalities Resolution - Broadband Internet
Presented by: Lynette Tremblay, Manager, Intergovernmental Affairs

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the following Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Broadband Resolution be forwarded to FCM for consideration at the 2017 FCM Convention:

WHEREAS establishing a fibre optic network is essential for the provision of high speed internet services within Canada and is a foundation for future economic development, economic diversification and community sustainability priorities;

WHEREAS the cost to transmit over existing infrastructure or to install new infrastructure where none currently exists continues to be cost-prohibitive to municipalities;

WHEREAS many communities continue to be underserved by internet providers;

WHEREAS Canadian municipalities are launching initiatives that leverage network-based technologies to strategically improve services to residents and businesses;

WHEREAS the success of these initiatives is reliant upon the availability of high bandwidth internet connectivity and connections to and between facilities and other local infrastructure;

WHEREAS the Akamai State of the Internet Report ranks Canada only 21st globally for average internet speeds with an average of 11.9 Mbps;

WHEREAS the World Development Report 2016: Digital Dividends published a paper stating that numerous studies conducted globally found a direct correlation between an increase in fixed broadband penetration and an increase in GDP;

WHEREAS the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission has declared broadband internet a basic telecommunications service;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities request that the Federal Government include municipalities as a key stakeholder in the development of broadband infrastructure policies and programs;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Federation of Canadian Municipalities request that the Federal Government provide direct funding and support to municipalities in ensuring affordable access to, or the development of, high speed (100 Mbps and faster) community network infrastructure in priority employment and other urban areas.

Resolution Background:

Many Canadian municipalities have launched 'smart city' or 'intelligent community' initiatives, with the intention of leveraging technologies to strategically improve municipal efficiency, economic development and community services. The success of these endeavours will be reliant upon the availability of high bandwidth Internet connectivity as well as network connections to and between municipal facilities and other infrastructure.

Fast, reliable and affordable internet access is an imperative in today's digital knowledge economy, and how communities that lack this will quickly fall behind. Internet is fundamental requirement for future economic and social competitiveness, and the growth of smarter communities.

In his address to the 2015 FCM Convention delegation, Prime Minister Trudeau spoke about "widespread broadband coverage across the country" and "working closely with municipalities to get results".

The Federal Government is developing a new broadband improvement program and the Canadian Radio Television and Communications Commission (CRTC) is conducting a review of its policies and standards with respect to Canada's broadband services in order to be in step with the future and the changing needs of Canadians. Most recently, the CRTC declared broadband internet a basic telecommunications service. CRTC Chair Jean-Pierre Blais stated at a news conference that "The future of our economy, our prosperity and our society - indeed, the future of every citizen - requires us to set ambitious goals, and to get on with connecting all Canadians for the 21st century."

This is the first time this resolution has been submitted on this topic to FCM. The Federal Government has historically allocated some funding towards improving internet access in rural areas, including Budget 2016's commitment of up to \$500 million over five years to "extend and enhance broadband service in rural and remote communities." This is a laudable initiative, however, it fails to address a significant gap on this issue. To that end, this resolution would seek to accomplish the following:

1. It proposes to entrench municipalities as a recognized stakeholder in the development of policies and programs;
2. It seeks to broaden the scope of the issue beyond exclusively rural and remote communities and residential needs.
3. It includes economic development and employment areas as key objectives/investment locations; and
4. It recognizes the unique needs of urban areas and their position at the heart of Canada's economic

future.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a recommended resolution to submit to FCM regarding the development of broadband internet.

COUNCIL DIRECTION

On May 24, 2016 Council passed the following motions:

C347-2016

That the *AUMA Broadband Resolution 2016*, provided as Attachment 1 to the May 24, 2016 report entitled "AUMA Resolution - Broadband Internet", be forwarded to the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association for consideration at the Annual General Meeting October 5-7, 2016.

Council also approved the Strategic Advocacy Plan on June 13, 2016, which declares improved broadband internet to be an advocacy priority.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Council's AUMA resolution regarding broadband internet passed at the October 2016 AUMA Convention and is now being advocated for by AUMA. It has also been included in the mandate of AUMA's Infrastructure and Energy Committee. The Federal Government has indicated that improved broadband internet is a priority and that they are willing to allocate funding towards such initiatives. Thus far, funding has been dedicated to improving broadband in rural and remote areas exclusively. The Canada Radio-television Telecommunications Commission ruled on December 21, 2016 that broadband internet access is a basic telecommunications service. This decision signals a fundamental shift in regulations for basic services from voice-related issues to broadband-related issues.

FCM resolutions must be submitted by January 9, 2017 11:59 p.m. for consideration at the 2017 FCM Convention to take place in Ottawa, Ontario from June 1-4, 2017. Resolutions must be approved by the Council of the sponsoring municipality. As such, Administration is recommending that Council submit a broadband resolution to FCM that is similar to the resolution submitted to AUMA, edited to reflect a national focus and purpose. Administration has presented a draft resolution for Council consideration and debate.

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS OR ENGAGEMENT

The City of Leduc is willing to act as a co-sponsor to this resolution and will be passing a motion to endorse it at their January 9, 2017 council meeting.

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

Financial:

Government funding support to provide broadband community infrastructure would reduce the impact of such a project on the City's capital budget.

Increased broadband speed, access and affordability will help existing local businesses grow and access the digital economy. It will also serve as an attraction to potential businesses and investors, which supports the City's ability to grow over time.

Legal / Risk: None

Program or Service:

Broadband connectivity is foundational to the Smart City Master Plan.

Organizational:

The successful adoption of this resolution by FCM is part of a broader advocacy initiative around increasing affordability, accessibility and quality of broadband for the City of St. Albert. Successful completion of this initiative stands to provide a series of benefits for the City and its residents.

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

If Council does not wish to support the recommendation, the following alternatives could be considered:

1. Do not approve the Recommendation and provide to submit the resolution as part of the 2017 FCM resolutions process, and defer possible submission to 2018.
2. Do not approve the Recommendation and allow the City of Leduc to act as sole sponsor of the resolution if they choose to do so.

STRATEGIC CONNECTIONS

- a) City of St. Albert Strategic Plan
- b) Smart City Master Plan
- c) Council's Strategic Advocacy Plan

Report Date: January 9, 2017

Author(s): Lynette Tremblay

Committee/Department: City Manager's Office

General Manager: n/a

City Manager: Chris Jardine