

Staff Report



To	City Council
Service Area	Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services
Date	Monday, October 25, 2021
Subject	Bell Fibre Expansion Agreement

Recommendation

1. That Council authorize the appropriate Deputy Chief Administrative Officer and/or City Engineer to negotiate and execute one or more agreements with Bell Canada for the express purpose of increasing capacity relating to Municipal Consents, Street Occupancy Permits, locates and other utility-related works in connection with the proposed fibre overlay project.
 2. That the agreement be for a term of no longer than 3 years related to the proposed fibre overlay project to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor.
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Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

To inform Council of upcoming Bell 'Fibre to the Home' overlay work and request approval to negotiate and enter into an expansion agreement to address resourcing requirements for the duration of the anticipated 3-year project.

Key Findings

Bell Canada intends to bring 'Fibre to the Home' to Guelph with plans to complete installation between 2022-2025. This work will support Guelph's economy through improved connectivity for businesses and residents throughout the city. The City and Bell are parties to a Municipal Access Agreement which outlines the terms and conditions under which Bell is permitted to construct, maintain, and operate its infrastructure in the municipal rights-of-way. Among other things, the Municipal Access Agreement sets out the process for obtaining permits and municipal consents, including application submission requirements, fees, and the timeframe for the City to review and issue/refuse to issue permits or consents.

To ensure the City's interests are protected and to provide appropriate services levels, additional human resources are required on a temporary contract basis. Bell is willing to enter into an agreement with the City of Guelph to increase staff on a temporary contract basis to ensure review timelines are maintained and proper oversight is provided.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications for the City of Guelph. All costs for contract positions are to be borne by Bell Canada.

Report

Bell Canada has embarked on an infrastructure expansion program within the city of Guelph. This project introduces 'Fibre to the Home' technologies to bring increased connectivity to Bell customers within the City.

As part of the City's responsibilities through the Engineering and Transportation Department, the City maintains and oversees Municipal Access Agreements for the use of City right-of-ways for installation and maintenance of third-party utility infrastructure. Presently the parties that are managed under utility coordination are Bell Canada, Rogers, Hydro-One telecom, Enbridge Gas, Alectra Utilities, and Internet Access Solutions.

As part of Guelph's infrastructure and economy, the utility sector has seen significant and continued growth over the last number of years. As such, the one existing full-time employee who oversees this area is over capacity and a request is within the forthcoming multi-year budget to increase capacity for the existing workload. The 'Fibre to the Home' project is new work above and beyond the existing utility workload.

In 2021, Bell Canada approached the City with plans to bring 'Fibre to the Home' to its customers. Bell has recently commenced this investment in the City by starting two significant projects bringing fibre to 10,000 homes in the City. Over the next three years, Bell will be aiming to bring fibre service to 15,000-20,000 additional homes per year. To meet required response times for review while maintaining the requisite level of oversight, additional staffing will be required to accommodate this activity. The increased volume is also expected to impact other areas, such as the City's utility locates program, and additional capacity may also be required in those areas.

The City is seeking to enter one or more agreements with the Bell for the duration of the project to assist with the resourcing requirements of this program by providing funding to expand staff capacity in affected service areas.

Further, for the City to respond at the speed of business under similar future circumstances, staff are considering whether there is a need for delegated authority for this type of arrangement to expand City service capacity to accommodate increased demand in connection with special projects. Any such request would be brought for Council consideration at a future date.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications for the City of Guelph. All costs related to increased capacity are to be borne by Bell Canada. The City presently has arrangements within the Municipal Access Agreements to cover the costs associated with third party utilities, including administrative fees, annual fees, and fees on a per-application basis. The expansion agreement(s) would maintain the fundamental concept of the Municipal Access Agreement whereby utility partners are required to cover the costs incurred by the City to oversee and manage these agreements.

At the time of this report, it is anticipated that the agreement with Bell will provide for two contract staff for an initial term of one-year, renewable to a maximum of three years. Staff will be Unionized Grade 6 with an annual cost burden of approximately \$77,200 per position. At this time, resource requirements remain under consideration and, in consultation with Finance, Human Resources and Legal,

additional positions may be provided for in one or more agreements with Bell, as described in this report.

Consultations

Jennifer Charles, Associate Solicitor, Legal

Greg Clarke, Manager, Financial Strategy & Long-Term Planning, Finance

Natasha Jacklyn, Human Resources Advisor, Human Resources

Jocelyn Meekins, Compensation and Data Analyst, Human Resources

Strategic Plan Alignment

Priority

Powering our Future

Direction

Help businesses to succeed and add value to the community.

Alignment

Encouraging 'Fibre to the Home' infrastructure supports the work of key sectors of Guelph's economy through improved connectivity.

Priority

Building our Future

Direction

Continue to build equitable, strong, vibrant, safe and healthy communities that foster resilience in the people who live here.

Alignment

Building a community that supports us by working with our utility partners to manage and increase existing communication infrastructure.

Attachments

None

Departmental Approval

Tara Baker, Treasurer / General Manager, Finance

Report Author

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This report was approved by:

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This report was recommended by:

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