



2025 Budget Request

Request: Fibre Optic Internet - Administration Office

From: Brittany Drury

Department: Corporate Services (Information Technology)

Total Financial Ask: \$100,000

Type of Budget Request: Capital (One-Time Project)

This document and its attachments are public and available in an accessible format upon request.

Background and Strategic Priority

Since the pandemic, the Grey Bruce region has seen unprecedented investment in broadband infrastructure – progress made possible through province-wide grants to improve internet access in an increasingly virtual world. While the Township has been slow to see much of this investment, 2025 is expected to see increased connection opportunities throughout the Georgian Bluffs community, including in areas surrounding the Township Administration Office in Springmount.

Installation of Fibre Optic Internet at the Administration Office achieves Council's fifth strategic pillar, as established in the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan, being, "Deliver Effective and Cost-Efficient Services.

Said pillar identifies the Township as a leader in municipal and customer service excellence, through a focus on fiscal responsibility and investing in online and accessible services. Within said pillar, objectives 5.1 to 5.3 establish an expectation for enhancements in service delivery through online opportunities, accessible meetings and citizen engagement – the success of which are dictated by the Township's broadband and connection reliability.

Enhancing service delivery and prioritizing accessible and virtual services will continue to be prioritized in the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan.



Analysis

The pandemic brought a shift in service delivery across all industries, resulting in an expectation for dependable and accessible virtual services. Since 2020, the Township has made all of the following services available virtually:

- Online payments,
- Virtual applications for building, planning and licensing programs,
- Accessible meeting agendas and information libraries,
- Off-site work investments,
- Virtual meeting attendance for both Council and the public,
- Increased public engagement opportunities, and
- Livestreaming of all Council and Committee meetings and events.

All of the above assist in delivering accessible services to the public, from anywhere, ensuring business continuity.

With increased online opportunities, comes increased dependency on internet connectivity and broadband capacity. As the method in which we deliver services changes, the ways in which we provided said services evolve. As the Township looks to IT provisions over the next five years, all platforms and services will be pivoted to cloud-based technology, over that of the existing server-based tech. This expansion of services requires reliable connectivity with increased power and storage capabilities.

To continue to deliver online services, offer accessible meetings and enhance the Township's virtual presence, increased, more reliable broadband is required. Currently, all Township systems, including all software's, servers and phone systems are powered by wireless broadband, which, at times, is easily interrupted by storms, power outages, etc. In moving to a fibre optic connection, the Township's internet connection becomes hard-wired, no longer reliant upon connectivity strength of wireless broadband, uninterrupted by weather conditions and the number of users on a network.

Upon converting to more virtual services out of the pandemic, staff investigated moving to fibre optic connections through a capital request in the 2021 Budget cycle. At the time, costs associated with the project were simply too high to justify. With fibre optic installation occurring at Deviation Road in 2025, staff are investigating running the same service to the Administration Office, to a maximum cost of \$100,000.00.



Upon installation of the virtual sign at the Administration Office, a conduit was installed to facilitate future fibre optic installation. Said conduit will bring the fibre optic connection from the sign to the building.

Financial Impact

The project remains in early stages, with costs to be defined over the course of Q4. Regular updates will be provided to Council to determine the viability of the project.

Pending further updates to Council, a placeholder of a maximum cost threshold of \$100,000 will be added as a capital project to the 2025 Budget. Staff are committed to keeping costs within the set threshold and investigating grants and creative funding solutions to minimize the project's overall budget impact.



Report Approval Details

Document Title:	2025 Budget Request - Fibre Optic Internet Administration Office.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Sep 5, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Niall Lobley, Chief Administrative Officer