

## **Rural Access to Broadband Internet Technology (RABIT) Task Force**

### **Staff Recommendation**

Staff is recommending that this Task Force not be re-established.

Rogers was successful in being awarded Block 50, the entire geographic area that the Town of The Blue Mountains is in, as identified in the Accelerated High-Speed Internet Program (AHSIP). The Town will be receiving a deputation by Rogers in 2023 that will outline the proposed implementation plan to provide high-speed internet services throughout the entire Town.

### **Previous Mandate:**

The Mandate of the Rural Access to Broadband Internet Technology Task Force is to:

1. Undertake strategic planning, program development, implementation and evaluation of initiatives for opportunities in providing effective, affordable and sustainable Broadband Internet to the entire Town of The Blue Mountains;
2. Engage and to work collaboratively with the County of Grey and the SouthWestern Integrated Fibre Technology ("SWIFT") to ensure appropriate information sharing is achieved;
3. Educate Council, community and stakeholders about the Mandate of the Task Force;
4. Connect with stakeholders who may assist in providing opportunities in the provision and funding of Rural Access to Broadband Internet;
5. Actively work with the local suppliers of Internet and other services that can provide utility corridors for the provision of Broadband Internet in The Blue Mountains;
6. Connect with community stakeholders that may be able to provide in-kind support;
7. Provide updates and recommendations to the Committee of the Whole of Council regarding progress and opportunities in the provision of Broadband Internet;
8. Recommend to Council on an annual basis, an operational budget that will also contemplate a long-term strategy for funding Rural Access to Broadband Internet opportunities and initiatives.

### **Previous Composition:**

The RABIT Task Force is comprised of up to two (2) members of Council.

Voting Members:

- 2 Members of Council
- Mayor as ex-officio (has voting rights on Task Force and can count towards quorum if an appointed member of Council is unable to attend)

**Previous Meeting Frequency:**

Meet at the call of the Chair.



## **Rural Access to Broadband Internet Technology (RABIT) Task Force**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

#### **2. PURPOSE**

The Town of The Blue Mountains ("Town") Rural Access to Broadband Internet Technology (RABIT) Task Force ("Task Force") is a Task Force of Council for matters related to the development, implementation and progress monitoring of sustainable solutions for Rural Access Broadband Internet in the Town of The Blue Mountains.

#### **3. MANDATE**

The Mandate of the Rural Access to Broadband Internet Technology Task Force is to:

1. Undertake strategic planning, program development, implementation and evaluation of initiatives for opportunities in providing effective, affordable and sustainable Broadband Internet to the entire Town of The Blue Mountains;
2. Engage and to work collaboratively with the County of Grey and the SouthWestern Integrated Fibre Technology ("SWIFT") to ensure appropriate information sharing is achieved;
3. Educate Council, community and stakeholders about the Mandate of the Task Force;
4. Connect with stakeholders who may assist in providing opportunities in the provision and funding of Rural Access to Broadband Internet;
5. Actively work with the local suppliers of Internet and other services that can provide utility corridors for the provision of Broadband Internet in The Blue Mountains;
6. Connect with community stakeholders that may be able to provide in-kind support;
7. Provide updates and recommendations to the Committee of the Whole of Council regarding progress and opportunities in the provision of Broadband Internet;
8. Recommend to Council on an annual basis, an operational budget that will also contemplate a long-term strategy for funding Rural Access to Broadband Internet opportunities and initiatives

#### **4. COMMUNICATION POLICY & PROTOCOL**

The purpose is to establish guidelines for effective communication practice and tactics to support the activities between the Task Force, Council, Stakeholders, the public and the media.

##### **Definition**

Communication protocol of the Task Force includes social media, interviews, advertisements and other relevant correspondence, etc., and will be conducted by the Task Force Chair to promote the progress of initiatives and to communicate all/any engagement activities.

To achieve successful communication practices -- a coordinated approach will reflect consistent standards, messaging and branding and will be in collaboration with staff on all communication regarding Task Force activities.

##### **Protocol Objectives**

The Task Force will have a profile in the community and as a result, members may be engaged in activities that put them in direct contact with Internet providers, citizens and various organizations. The primary responsibility for communication of information is held by the Task Force Chair.

All Task Force members are expected to abide by the following guidelines:

1. Only the Task Force Chair can speak on behalf of the Task Force.
2. Task Force members shall not direct any messaging without approval of the Chair.
3. The Task Force Chair plays an important role in ensuring that a functional relationship with high integrity exists within the Task Force, and with Council, the community, stakeholders and the public. Conflict can be a constructive part of the group decision-making process. When conflict becomes ongoing, inappropriate, unconstructive, or offensive, the Chair may need to intervene with an appropriate dispute resolution mechanism.

##### **Policy Directives**

1. Communications produced from the Task Force cannot be contradictory to the policies and by-laws of the Town.
2. Any communication of a policy nature shall be recommended to Council for their ratification.
3. If a staff liaison is uncomfortable with a proposed communication from the Task Force, the staff member should direct it to the Department Head for guidance.

#### **5. ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Task Force will report to and/or provide recommendations to the Committee of the Whole of Council on a quarterly basis through accessible reports. Council may request update reports at any time on specific projects or initiatives.

## **6. MEMBERSHIP**

The Task Force will be composed of the following;

- Two (2) Council members

The Mayor acts as an ex-officio and has voting rights on the Task Force. The Mayor can count towards quorum in the event that an appointed member of Council is unable to attend.

The Task Force will reach a consensus on procedural matters, but no votes shall be formally recorded.

### **Staff Resources:**

- Chief Administrative Officer
- Additional Town staff as approved
- Administrative Assistant

## **7. QUORUM**

Quorum for the Task Force, per the standards of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, is 50% plus one (1) of the membership.

## **8. SUB-COMMITTEES**

Due to the specific and focused subject matter and the mandate scope, sub-committees of the Task Force will not be considered.

## **9. REMUNERATION**

No compensation shall be made to members of the Task Force for their participation. As a member of the Task Force there is no remuneration reward.

## **10. MEETING DETAILS, AGENDA, MINUTES & PROCEDURE**

1. The Task Force shall meet at the call of the Chair. Meetings will be held in the Committee Room at the Town of The Blue Mountains Town Hall. If the Committee Room is not available an appropriate alternative location will be selected.
2. Periodically, Task Force meetings will be open to the public and recorded.
3. Agenda items will be set by Chair.
4. Minutes will be kept by the Town of The Blue Mountains Administrative Assistant.
5. Administrative Staff and Resources provided by the Town of The Blue Mountains (services provided by Town staff will be included in the operational budget for the Task Force and tracked).
6. Task Force must establish clear goals and objectives that are measurable.
7. Meeting Minutes will be provided to Council in the form of Action Item Tracking only.
8. The Terms of Reference is a living document and may be revised as required with approval of Council.

## **11. TERM**

The Term of the Task Force shall be to June 30, 2021 unless extended by a resolution of Council.

## **12. RELATED POLICIES & TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

Due to Task Force membership being members of Council, all related training requirements have been achieved.

POL.COR.07.07 Code of Conduct for Members of Council, Town of The Blue Mountains

POL.COR.17.04 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Town of The Blue Mountains

POL.COR.18.04 Protocol Policy for Complaints Related to Council Members and Local Boards

POL.COR.18.08 Workplace Violence & Harassment Policy, Town of The Blue Mountains

POL.COR.18.10 Social Media Policy, Town of The Blue Mountains

POL.COR.19.02 Council Staff Relationship Protocol, Town of The Blue Mountains

[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c.11](#)

[Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, R.S.O. 1990](#)

[Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990](#)