



October 6, 2020

Mayor & Council
East Ferris

VIA email only - municipality@eastferris.ca

Dear Mayor Rochefort and Councillors,

We wanted to acknowledge the recent motion, that was passed during the September 22nd Council meeting asking Citizen's to raise their voices, MP Anthongy Rota and MPP Victor Fedeli to examine the opportunity to re-instate the role played by FedNor and NOHFC and the Federal Government to release funding for the National Broadband Initiative.

As you are likely aware, we have been busy raising the community's voice regarding our internet needs. Many residents took time away from their busy schedules to write personal letters and provide a view into their lives. Not including the letters that were sent directly to our politicians, in total, the package included twenty-nine (29) resident letters and twelve (12) business testimonials that were distributed to forty-two (42) politicians and political influencers. These included:

1. MPP Vic Fedeli
2. Speaker of the House and MP Anthony Rota
3. Ministry of Rural Economic Development and Women and Gender Equality
4. Ministry of Innovation, Science and Industry
5. Ministry of Infrastructure and Communities
6. Ministry of Economic Development, Job Development and Trade
7. Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
8. Northern Ontario Liberal Caucus
9. Members of the Opposition
10. CRTC
11. Spectrum Group
12. Bell Residential and Small Business
13. Rogers

We are encouraged by the the number of positive responses and want to thank Mayor Rochefort for supporting and directly contributing to this effort.

Our group was also excited to see the recent presentation by the Spectrum Group in which they committed their own resources to expand fibre to a number of our residents over the next two and a half years. This is great news for our community. As noted, the full potential of this expansion effort will only be achieved when the backhaul infrastructure is upgraded to fibre as well. This will require



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further planning and funding for sure. It is a bit disappointing to see that the most economic way to do this is by building their own infrastructure rather than piggy backing on existing infrastructure. There surely has to be a way to promote cooperation between groups like Hydro One and the providers to stretch the dollars even further. The Municipality should, if they haven't already, think of how to reduce this waste as much as possible.

The recent announcement by FONOM, regarding Starlink, was interesting but frankly a bit puzzling to us. Endorsing an unproven technology for which the cost to the consumer is still unknown, seems premature. We likely do not fully appreciate the strategy with this announcement but we believe that Northern Ontario communities may get a false sense of comfort and decide to wait and see. The reality is that the internet speeds expected to be delivered by low earth orbit satellites are still not understood. Reports to date show speeds less than can be achieved by fibre and it is still unknown whether speeds can be improved as advances are made with the technology. The risk is that Northern and rural communities will continue to lag and even be left behind if communities make decisions based on incomplete data. Another note is the fact that we do have a Canadian company in the process of delivering similar technology. Admitted they are not as far along the development path as Starlink however to declare a winner so early is surprising.

In wrapping this letter up, we hope that the Municipality can provide answers for the following questions.

1. Can the Municipality work with the Service Providers and other owners of infrastructure to streamline delivery and maximize the impact of the dollars being invested in our community so that as many of our residents can see the benefits as soon as possible?
2. Can the Municipality commit to remaining focused on delivering fibre infrastructure to our community? We can not expect that unproven technologies will save the day.

From our previous correspondence, for which we have yet to receive a response, can you provide answers to the following?

1. Has the Municipality thought further on the idea of a multi-pronged approach to providing high speed internet to East Ferris? Even if some funding is received, it will likely not cover the full amount as laid out in Blue Sky Net's estimates. We strongly believe that if we want to be taken seriously, the Municipality must be prepared to contribute.
2. Understanding that a longer term, sustainable solution for high speed internet will not be achieved quickly, can the Municipality engage the current internet providers to improve speeds with current infrastructure AND/OR to explore all available technologies (including LTE and Fixed wireless) to reach as many East Ferris residents as possible in the short to medium term?





3. Can you provide the timing for the Community rollout of Spectrum Telecom Group's findings and report, including technologies being considered, anticipated internet speeds and infrastructure expansion plans?
4. How can the East Ferris Internet Advocacy Group (EFIAG) contribute as we move forward?

The Community is doing all that we can to raise awareness not only at a local level but at a provincial and federal level. We think that it is time that the Municipality and Council show how serious they are about providing high speed internet for our community.

Thanks.

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