Spring 2020 Cell Phone & Internet Service Coverage Survey

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In an effort to identify gaps in cellular phone and internet service coverage in and around Pike Lake, the Pike Lake Community Association sent an on-line survey to 130 members of the Pike Lake community who are on the PLCA email distribution list. Survey participants were asked to answer 10 questions related to the level of cellular phone and internet service coverage at their lake property.

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The results clearly indicated the need for action to address the inadequate levels of cellular phone and internet service coverage in and around Pike Lake.

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You can read the Executive Summary of the survey and see maps of the coverage by clicking on the following three  documents:

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* Executive Summary
* Cellular Service Coverage Map
* Internet Service Coverage Map

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**Various updates to the issue follow:**

**December 2020 Update**

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Below please find the most recent information regarding cellular and internet service in the Pike Lake area.

At a December 2nd Tay Valley Township meeting, Kurt Greaves, Chief Administrative Officer of the County of Lanark, updated councillors on efforts underway to improve, over the next few years, cell and Internet service across eastern Ontario.  On the cell front, a $213 million project championed by the Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) will see construction begin next year to bring inaugural or better cell service, over 2021-2025, to 99% of residences, businesses, and arterial roads throughout the region.

On the Internet front, EORN aspires "to bring fibre [optic] service to every home in Eastern Ontario."  This could be a $1.2 to $1.6 billion investment requiring contributions from federal, provincial, and municipal governments.  As explained last week by Mr. Greaves, the County of Lanark is proposing specific municipality by municipality projects cost-shared 17% by the County, 17% by the given municipality, 17% by customers to benefit from the service, and 50% by the company (i.e., the Internet Service Provider) eventually chosen to undertake the project.

**March 2021 Update**

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**Eastern Ontario Regional Network Awards Contract for Cell Expansion to Rogers Communications**

(March 19, 2021 – EASTERN ON) – Strong and reliable cellular services are critical to help rural communities take part in the economy, create jobs and improve public safety. Together, Canada, Ontario and municipal governments across Eastern Ontario are supporting the Eastern Ontario Regional Network’s Cell Gap Project that will improve both the reach and quality of cellular services throughout the region.

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Today, the Honourable Maryam Monsef, Canada’s Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development and the Honourable Laurie Scott, Ontario’s Minister of Infrastructure, joined Warden J. Murray Jones, Chair of the Eastern Ontario Regional Network, Warden Debbie Robinson,  Chair of the Eastern Ontario Wardens’ Caucus and Mayor Diane Therrien, Chair of the Eastern Ontario Mayors’ Caucus to announce that Rogers Communications has been awarded the contract to improve the coverage and capacity of cell networks in the region.

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Rogers Communications’ investment brings the total value of the public-private partnership to more than $300 million. This includes investments from the federal and provincial governments who each contributed $71 million and an additional $10 million from the Eastern Ontario Wardens’ Caucus and most municipalities within the Eastern Ontario Mayors’ Caucus.

Rogers Communications was selected through a competitive bidding process to identify a telecommunication partner who offered both the expertise and best value for expanded cell coverage.

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) has designated both mobile and fixed broadband as basic services for all Canadians. The project is designed to improve cell coverage across the area where people live, work and travel. It aims to provide:

* 99 per cent of the area with voice calling services.
* At least 95 per cent of the area with standard-definition (SD) level services, such as video-app calls, basic app usage and streaming of SD video.
* At least 85 per cent of the area with service levels that can support streaming high-definition video and more data-intensive apps.

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Additional investments will increase capacity of networks in high density, high usage areas.

To better serve rural Eastern Ontario, an area of some 50,000 square kilometres, the project will involve construction of more than 300 new telecommunication sites and will upgrade more than 300 existing sites over the next four to five years. Upgrades and construction will begin as early as this spring. Powered by Ericsson, Rogers brings the latest generation in 5G wireless network technology, which over time will deliver unprecedented speed, instant response times, and fast, reliable connections that transform how people live and work. New services will be activated as groups of towers are built or upgraded. The project is to be completed in 2025.

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For more information, view this background document and you can watch the EORN Cell Gap Project Partner Video that was shown during the announcement or view the full announcement video.

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**April 2022 Update**

Last year many people responded to the questionnaire about cell phone/internet  service to assist in the quest for better service at the lake.

The most recent update was received yesterday in the EORN Newsletter - excerpts below:

The EORN Cell Gap Project aims to dramatically improve cell phone coverage and capacity in the areas of eastern Ontario where people live, work and travel on major roadways. Valued at more than $300 million, the project will involve construction of approximately 265 new telecommunications towers and the upgrade of more than 300 existing sites. Upgrading of the existing sites is now underway and as of March 14, 2022, 140 towers have been upgraded. Construction of six new towers has also commenced. Work is to be completed by 2025, with new services activated as groups of towers are completed. About half the project funding comes from the federal and provincial governments, as well as municipal members of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC) and most of the Eastern Ontario Mayors' Caucus (EOMC). The balance is investment by Rogers Communications, which was selected through a competitive bidding process.

**Land use authority (LUA)**

All new cell telecommunications towers need to go through a land use authority (LUA) process, which is set by the federal government, and managed by municipalities. Telecommunications service providers (TSPs) contact the municipality to start the LUA process once they have found a site location for a proposed new tower and often after they have signed a lease with the property owner. In the case of the EORN Cell Gap Project, Rogers Communications will initiate the process with municipal governments. Federally, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) sets out the parameters of the LUA process, including public consultation requirements. Municipalities can add their own requirements by developing their own tower siting protocol. EORN has developed a Tower Siting Resource Guide (10 MB/PDF) to assist municipalities in this process.

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