

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, October 22, 2024

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: BELL FIBRE-TO-THE-HOME (FTTH) AGREEMENT EXTENSION

FROM:

Shanon Kalra-Ramjoo, Acting Deputy City Manager, Public Works

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

This report provides an update on the Bell Fibre-to-the-Home Project and seeks Council Authority for staff to extend and amend the “Fibre to the Home (FTTH) Project” Agreement with Bell Canada (Bell).

Report Highlights

- Since 2019, Bell Canada has been expanding its network in Vaughan to bring fibre-optic connectivity to over 100,000 homes and businesses in the city.
- The city has a FTTH Project Agreement with Bell which is set to expire on December 31, 2024.
- Bell’s FTTH project volume is slowing down and reaching project completion with a new focus on multi-dwelling units and businesses. Bell has requested to extend and amend the project agreement to reflect updated staffing needs, without changes to any other terms and conditions.
- City staff support an extension of the project agreement for another year starting on January 1, 2025 and further amending it to reflect updated staffing needs. Any future extensions or amendments, if required, will be assessed on an annual basis and staff will report back to Council.

Recommendations

1. That Council authorize staff to extend and amend the “Fibre to the Home Project” Agreement with Bell Canada, in a form acceptable to Legal Services and the Deputy City Manager, Public Works; and

2. That the Deputy City Manager, Public Works be authorized to execute the extending and amending agreement with Bell.

Background

In February 2019, the City entered into an agreement with Bell Canada to improve high-speed internet communications for the City's residents and businesses.

Bell has upgraded its infrastructure network delivering fibre-optic internet service to over 100,000 homes and businesses with coverage of over 75% of the city. This expansion has replaced aging copper wire technology designed for land-line telephone service, which limits the speed and reliability of internet service that Bell can provide.

Given the scale of the project, Bell has been funding dedicated City resources to review applications and issue permits which ensures all work can be completed safely and efficiently.

As part of the City's review process, staff from the Transportation and Fleet Management Services (TFMS) department review applications and project documents that are prepared and submitted by Bell. Permits are issued to allow construction to proceed. As part of the expiring agreement, Bell and City staff had determined that four (4) dedicated staff were required to provide the service levels requested by Bell. Bell had agreed to fund these staff resources who work – on contract – directly for the City and are dedicated to support the FTTH project. Their roles include permit application review, project coordination, construction oversight, site inspection, and addressing resident enquiries.

Previous Reports/Authority

Bell FTTH Program Agreement, Extract from Council meeting of March 10, 2021 (Item 5, Report No. 8) [Request for Authority to Amend and Renew "Fibre To The Home" Agreement with Bell Canada](#)

Analysis and Options

The FTTH Project Agreement needs to be updated and extended for another year to reflect resource needs associated with declining project volumes, without changing other terms in the agreement.

After expanding fibre-optic connectivity to over 100,000 homes and businesses, Bell is winding down the project on residential units with a new focus on multi-dwelling units and businesses in 2025. The remaining work will still require that service levels be

maintained for permit issuance, approvals, and inspection oversight. Bell, in consultation with City staff, have determined that three (3) dedicated contract staff will now be required to support the project until the end of 2025. Overall, the FTTH project is anticipated to fully end in the next one (1) to two (2) years, subject to annual progress reviews by Bell and City staff.

Extending and amending the FTTH Project Agreement will ensure that Bell continues to fund required resources for the City to meet expected service levels.

Staff support Bell's proposal to extend and amend the FTTH project agreement to ensure Bell continues to provide sufficient resources for project oversight. Any future project extensions, if required, will be assessed on an annual basis. Staff will be reporting back should future extensions be required.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts associated with this decision. Bell will fully fund the required city resources to support this project.

Operational Impact

There are no operational impacts associated with this decision. Legal and Finance have been consulted.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

There are no regional impacts associated with this decision.

Conclusion

Building on the successes realized through the first six (6) years of the FTTH Project, authorizing staff to execute the extension and associated amendments with Bell to complete the FTTH Project as it winds down will allow the City to showcase to residents and businesses that Vaughan is a desirable and reliable technological hub, while ensuring sufficient resources to undertake the necessary oversight of construction activities across the City.

For more information, please contact Steven Fantin, Director of Transportation and Fleet Management Services, ext. 6141

Attachments

N/A

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