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MUNICIPALITY OF TEMAGAMI**
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Ministry of Infrastructure
Delegation, August 18, 2020

Good Morning

Thank you for meeting with us.

The Municipality of Temagami covers just over 1900 square kilometres and is situated at the north end of the District of Nipissing bordering the District of Timiskaming. While our full time population is between 800 and 900 (depending on which source you use), seasonally our population explodes as we have a multitude of lakes within our boundary. There are also four Provincial Parks and other tourist draws from the Temagami Tower to the White Bear Forest to the Old Growth Trails on Lake Temagami.

Historically, employment was through mining, forestry, and a significant number of provincial personnel mostly employed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. While prospecting still occurs from time to time, similar to most other historic mining areas, these operations no longer exist. The same can be said for the forestry. While there is a group working on improvements to the state and harvest of the Temagami Forest, the industry will most likely not be restored to its former glory. As for the government workers? Well even if there was a policy change, the majority of government buildings are no longer standing.

So we are not all 'doom and gloom' there are a few community groups as well as a dedicated core of individuals that work to promote Temagami as a place to live and do business, reality is that it will be some time before our full time population reaches past levels.

Access to reliable high speed internet is vital to our community. We have, however, not just made the statement but have acted upon it. We assisted organizing Neonet's summit earlier this year and are working to get more support in our region as well as researching and applying for (or supporting applications) in programs designed to increase broadband in our community.

It should be noted that although there has been fibre installed to our community, the cost to access this, either individually or through an Internet Service Provider, has proven to be extremely cost prohibitive. For example, to increase our internet capabilities at our municipal office, the quote to have fibre available at our office was over \$65,000 plus the monthly service charges. This is just for one location! Unfortunately, there does not seem to be any further provincial involvement in telecommunications in Northern Ontario but we are most definitely not being served by the present situation.

We are looking for alternatives to the traditional and very costly fibre backhaul and wanted you to be aware of the efforts we have been making in trying to improve this service.

We also are a little perplexed with the approval process under the ICIP Funding programs. We have been told that we score low in the joint application scoring which is reasonable given our remoteness to other municipalities. The latest rejection was to complete improvements to one of our water systems which was recommended by OCWA. While we have two water and wastewater systems with a total user count of 350, we were not able to combine an application since our systems don't touch. While once again we were told that joint projects were given preference, we then saw a number of water and wastewater projects being approved. Given the nature of water and wastewater projects, these could not have been joint projects either.

As noted, we have 350 users split between two water and wastewater systems. We did not install these but were 'voluntold' by the Province that they were our responsibility. Now, there does not seem to be any support for our water or wastewater system when we are handcuffed by not being joint when other places appear to be approved.

Noting that the reviewers were surprised with the volume of grant requests when compared to the available funds demonstrates that since the mid 1990's the funding available for municipal programs has greatly lagged behind the need. We are already facing increases of 30% in our user rates just to complete a UV Filtration required by Provincial Order, and to clean up our water towers. While there are other needs there is no further ability for our users to pay for this. Our situation is not unique. Nor do we believe the reason given for our rejection is valid with similar projects in other areas are being approved.

As a further example, we did apply for reconstruction of a portion of the Lake Temagami Access Road. Again, we are remote to other municipalities and were told that if we were a joint project we would have been approved. While this road experiences significant use by members of Temagami First Nation as it is the only road access to the landing used to access their Island Reserve, their funding arrangements would not allow them to participate financially. We also do not receive anything for road maintenance from Temagami First Nation which leaves us paying for services beyond what our ratepayers require. We did submit a letter of support.

The total estimate for this reconstruction project is over \$30 million. Even a portion of the road, which is what was applied for, is beyond our means without some sort of funding. We feel that regardless of our need, due to our location we will continually be turned down tagged as a non-joint project when a quick review of grants approved show that this is an excuse of convenience.

We believe this is a systematic flaw in your approval process that unjustly makes it more difficult for northern, rural municipalities who have as their neighbours large areas of unorganized territories to be successful in successfully applying for infrastructure funds and ask that you review this process to ensure there is equity in these competitive funding programs.

We trust that you will give this request due consideration.

Thank you for your time.