



June 26, 2023

**Honourable Kinga Surma**

**Ontario Minister of Infrastructure**

5th Floor, 777 Bay St.

Toronto, ON, M7A 2J3

[Minister.MOI@ontario](mailto:Minister.MOI@ontario).

**Re: Broadband improvement and expansion in Durham**

Dear Honourable Minister Surma,

The Whitby Chamber of Commerce is the largest Chamber in the Region and represents over 650 businesses in Whitby and the Durham Region. Considering the priorities and best interests of our membership (as highlighted by our annual survey), our Advocacy Committee aims to promote available resources and information on local broadband to our community and advocate for expanded and more reliable services.

We commend the intergovernmental collaborations which have resulted in how much we have accomplished thus far, including Durham Region being named one of the top 7 intelligent communities in the world in 2023 by the Intelligent Community Forum. While recent provincial budgets made broadband investments a high priority, we were disappointed that no new funding was announced in the 2023 budget. There remains much work to do including improving Internet speeds to functional levels for those areas with existing broadband that only barely meet the 50Mbps download and 10Mbps upload speeds which are defined by the CRTC as the minimum threshold for broadband connectivity.

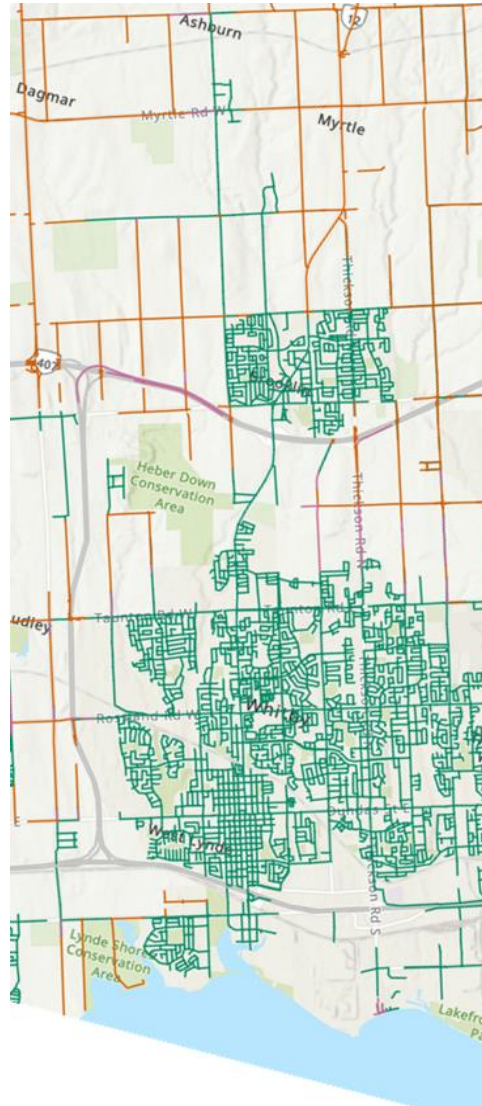
From our business community's perspective, the lack of universally available truly high-speed Internet continues to impede businesses' delivery of reliable customer service and hinder business growth and new business establishment. The Whitby Chamber's 2023 Advocacy Survey identified broadband as a top 5 issue that demands "the most attention, time and resources" from the members and their business. Similarly, community consultation of the Town of Whitby's 2022-26 Economic Development Strategy identified lack of broadband availability as a "weakness" to economic and development goals.

We understand that planned investments may resolve some of these challenges. Accordingly, the provision of more detailed timelines and project plans would help our community understand the roadmap and alleviate stressors from the "unknown". Such detailed information would support successful strategic planning for economic growth.



To this effect, we would appreciate hearing from you on the below:

1. **What funding can the Region expect from the Provincial government to support broadband expansion?**
2. This [Map](#) of Whitby identifies “Pending government funded high-speed internet projects” in Orange, which highlight many of Whitby’s rural roads, where many of our small and local businesses operate. **What is the next stage for broadband funding for these locations? When can these areas expect to have reliable access to highspeed internet?**
3. Appreciating the integral need for high-speed internet to participate in the community, school, workplace, etc.; **what steps have been taken to publicly fund high-speed internet?**



We look forward to the information you can share. We know our members and Committee would greatly appreciate it.

Durham and Whitby are bound for greater success, and integral infrastructure will be necessary to build on our momentum.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Scuse".

Andrew Scuse, President  
Whitby Chamber of Commerce

CC:  
The Honourable Francois-Phillippe Champagne  
Member of Provincial Parliament, Lorne Coe