



August 10, 2020

Improving Connectivity in Ontario (ICON) Program  
Ministry of Infrastructure  
777 Bay Street, 5th Floor  
Toronto, Ontario M5G 2C8

To Whom It May Concern

**RE: Region of Durham application to Improving Connectivity in Ontario (ICON) Program**

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This letter is in support of the Region of Durham's application to the Improving Connectivity in Ontario (ICON) program for the establishment of a Regional Broadband Network.

Society, and the global economy, is increasingly digital and online. The move to online delivery of government services, business functions and entertainment options was accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The growing demand for fast service and constant connectivity highlights the need for fast, reliable, and affordable broadband service for all residents and businesses.

Durham has many communities, particularly in our rural areas, that have poor internet service. There has been inadequate investment in these areas by Internet Service Providers (ISPs) because of the high cost of installing the infrastructure. The proposed Regional Broadband Network will address these concerns by extending high-speed fiber optic cables into our underserved areas and providing "off-ramps" into each community. Without the cost of building the long backbone network, ISPs can focus on building quality high-speed networks inside these communities to deliver faster, more reliable internet service to residents and businesses.

The Whitby Chamber of Commerce (WCC) is the voice of business and an accredited Chamber with over 720 members in the business community. We support this application because we share the vision for the Regional Broadband Network that will ensure our business community has access to reliable broadband. Investment in critical broadband infrastructure is a basic and critical requirement for continued business growth in our community. COVID 19 has demonstrated how important technology is to not only recover, but also to continue to grow and compete on a global scale.

As part of this project the WCC will explore opportunities to work with the Region on distributing surveys and encouraging the business community to contribute to related research projects and data requests to determine how to best deploy the technology. In addition, the Region will have access to our membership to engage them in related taskforce communications and workshops to better understand the needs of the business community and the critical importance of reliable broadband. This could include surveying the membership separately and providing postal code information for member businesses to help the Region map requirements.

Should you have any questions about Whitby Chamber of Commerce's support for this project, please contact Natalie Prychitko, Chief Executive Officer, at [natalie@whitbychamber.org](mailto:natalie@whitbychamber.org) for additional information.

Regards,

*Corette Miller*

Corette Miller  
President, Board of Directors  
Whitby Chamber of Commerce

c.c.

Mr. Rod Phillips, Ontario's Minister of Finance  
Mr. Lorne Coe, MPP Whitby  
Mr. Ryan Turnbull, M.P., Whitby  
Mr. John Henry, Regional Chair & CEO  
Mr. Don Mitchell, Mayor Town of Whitby