

Attachment 2: Regional & National Collaboration Related to Connectivity

GTHA/Regional Efforts

Under the leadership of the Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services, ConnectTO staff have facilitated extensive collaboration between GTHA regional partners.¹ Through several standing tables, staff from each municipality or region exchange best practice knowledge, data collection efforts, and explore opportunities for future cooperation.

Beginning in 2020, these efforts have focused on several initiatives in three key areas:

- Assessing GTHA members' infrastructure, connectivity needs, and interest in deepening collaboration to make efficient use of public connectivity assets. This includes a currently in-process RFP for an engagement to assess potential regional connectivity models.
- Research and production of a reporting of regional beneficiaries of federal and provincial broadband funding programs, demonstrating discrepancies between locations targeted and communities in need of assistance.
- Collaboration and joint communication to the federal government (Innovation, Science & Economic Development Canada) regarding its preliminary and final direction to the CRTC to enhance competition and affordability in Canada's internet service market.

National Efforts

The GTHA efforts regarding federal government communications and shared learning mirrored to a large extent the ConnectTO staff's collaboration with large cities across Canada in the context of the Big City Executive Partnership (BiCEP).

- City staff led efforts to draft two letters of comment and submission to Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) regarding its preliminary and final direction to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to enhance competition and affordability in Canada's internet service market. The letters conveyed the collective positions of Toronto and its municipal partners on matters ranging from the regulation of rates charged by dominant ISPs for competitor access to their networks, to supporting municipalities who, under current telecommunications policy, have little to no standing in negotiating with ISPs who wish to access public spaces. One of the two letters was formally signed by the City Managers of the BiCEP municipal partners, with the second by the GTHA partners.

¹ Among these partners are the Regional Municipality of Durham, Halton Region, the City of Hamilton, Region of Peel, and Regional Municipality of York. Among them, specific topics or degree of partnership vary.

- ConnectTO staff have also participated in collaboration on the national level by supporting and advising the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) on its 2021 adoption of Digital Affordability into its lobbying portfolio at the federal level.
- Staff have learned from BiCEP partners as ConnectTO looks to hone and expand its efforts. For example, in the development and implementation of its public Wi-Fi strategy, ConnectTO staff solicited information regarding the technical and policy considerations of Canadian cities.