Good evening everyone and welcome! We're extremely happy to have you here for a ConnectTO pre-tender information gathering session for phase 1.

So first, I wanted to welcome everybody and introduce myself. My name is Rhonda Tsingos. I'm a Management Consultant in the Digital City/Connected Communities section within the Technology Services division, and it's my pleasure to work alongside some of the colleagues here today on the ConnectTO initiative – all of whom are very excited about hearing from you as interested parties as well.

So, I will be moderating this evening, and helping out in terms of looking at your questions and answers that will be in the chat, which we'll talk to you about in a minute.

So, if I can have the first slide up, please Alice before I introduce the panel. We'll look at a few, I'll say, housekeeping items.

Because we are meeting in a virtual environment, as many may appreciate, because of COVID-19, we've been doing this now for just about 14 months or so. So, if you haven't had the opportunity to participate in a public meeting that's virtual before, we'll just go over a few things for your awareness.

So first of all, because this is virtual, there's two ways that you can participate in terms of having your stay.

You'll notice in the bottom right hand corner, there's a chat feature there. When you enter things into the chat, all of the attendee and panelists can see your comments and/or questions.

So that's one way you can raise a question for a panel member. I'll be looking at the chat and I will be sharing with the panel by reading those questions.

If you chat with one another, I won't be reading out those back and forth, but please feel free. This is a forum for you to share with one another as well, so feel free to do that, if you want to.

Staff will take a look at those afterwards and take note if those comments are related to what we're discussing here.

The other way that you can participate is to raise your virtual hand.
So, in the Participants list, you'll only see yourself and panel members for privacy reasons. So you don't see all attendees and only panelists have their cameras on and are unmuted.

So, if you want to raise your virtual hand, one of the moderators will call on you and unmute you so that you can ask your question. Then we ask you to lower your hand at your virtual hand, after you have asked for your question, and it's been answered.

Okay, so we will go through that a few times more if needed as we move forward.

We want to be respectful of the environment that we're in. It is, as I said, it's virtual, it's not something we're all extremely comfortable with, even though we, we may have been doing it before. Very similar to in a public meeting that would be in person, we want you to engage and be personable. And remember that everyone has a voice, so, one voice at a time please.

Be direct and if you can frame your question around the specific topic that's being dealt with or if you want to address it to a particular panelist, that's fine. We'll ask that you be brief and limit yourself to one question or comment at a time as there will be other opportunities to engage.

Be a good listener, keep an open mind and remember that we're in a respectful environment that is inclusive so please, please be careful how you phrase things, being respectful to one another, is the best way I can put this.

There will be an opportunity as well if we don't get to your questions this evening because there's a lot of them. Everyone here will have an opportunity to participate online. There will be a questionnaire that's available starting tomorrow, and that will be open for two weeks. So we, we are welcoming different ways on gathering your feedback. So, with that being said I want to make you aware that this meeting is being recorded.
And again, we will be posting the recording online for future viewing as well as the presentation which will be available in an accessible format.

And in the meantime, it's my privilege to introduce you to our esteemed panel this evening.

In addition to myself moderating behind the scenes is Hamish Goodwin, another Management Consultant in Technology Services. But here are the people who will be speaking with you this evening. We'll start off with –

- Lawrence Eta, our Chief Technology Officer, and
- Alice Xu, the Digital City/Connected Communities Manager.
- And Michelle Anthony, who is a Category Manager in our Purchasing & Materials Management division and will speak to us about the procurement process.

Now it's my privilege to pass the meeting over to Lawrence Eta, Chief Technology Officer to open it. Take it away, Lawrence.

Thank you very much, Rhonda. Thank you for kicking us off. Hello everyone. Good evening. Thank you all for joining us and taking the time in your evening to be part of this process within a very important initiative that my colleagues and I are looking to move forward.

To start us off, I'll say a few words of Land Acknowledgement.

TORONTO

We acknowledge the land we are meeting on is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.

Today we are here to discuss the digital equity and to look to the future of the type of place we want to live in. Reconciliation doesn't stop at the physical world: it extends to our digital spaces and beyond them. With that in mind, I would like to give voice to the words of Alexander Dirksen, a member of the Metis Nation, who delivered these remarks at Queen's University in November 2018. Alexander stated:

"There is so much wisdom in these territories and in the peoples who have been stewards of them since time immemorial. As we hold space today for dialogue on digital spaces, which so often feel ephemeral and borderless, it is critical for us to reaffirm the centrality of, and our connection to, these physical territories upon which we gather.

Meaningful change begins with recognition of technological innovation as a fundamentally human endeavour. Technology is not a neutral force nor are digital spaces safe spaces for all, instead mirroring, replicating and at times exacerbating the real and pressing realities faced by Indigenous peoples and other marginalized communities in physical spaces. A social justice lens must therefore be applied to all that we discuss, design and develop in the digital realm."

Again, I would like to personally thank you all on behalf of my colleagues for attending and we appreciate you taking this time to help the City build a solution that makes digital equity more achievable through ConnectTO. We'll move to the next slide please.

So, the purpose of our meeting today –

First, to provide some background and context - City of Toronto Council had requested that the Chief Technology Officer and the Chief Procurement Officer engage with the city's tech community and also potential end users and anti-poverty advocacy groups in gathering information sessions to leverage the community expertise prior to any tender documents being finalized for ConnectTO.

Our current situation shows that, as part of ConnectTO Phase 1, the City of Toronto will soon seek and select a third party service provider or providers in order to initiate the internet and network connectivity for those three identified sites in 2021 through a tender or procurement process.

City staff are now gathering information with your support and your help to inform the ConnectTO Phase 1 procurement documents before they are finalized and issued.

In the future, we will have further ConnectTO consultation opportunities to help us in 2021 and 2022 and beyond. For example, that could entail the digital equity policy. Next slide please.

So, the agenda today -

We're going to first start on presentations by staff, which will include an overview of the ConnectTO initiative as well as the procurement process that the City of Toronto is about to embark on for Phase 1.
There will be an opportunity for you to ask questions about the presentations before we move on to the information gathering portion of the session which will be in the form of staff asking you questions.

We look forward to hearing from you as the community experts to help inform the way we will state the requirements for ConnectTO phase 1 within our procurement process.

So, that's information gathering and then next steps.

All very, very important in terms of the process. So let's move to the next slide in the deck please. I'm now going to hand things over to my colleague, Alice, to take us through the presentation. Thank you Alice.

Thank you, Lawrence, and thank you again to everybody for being here tonight for taking time out of your day to help us inform this phase 1 approach.

So, I just wanted to let everyone know that if you want to raise your hand and you're on the phone, I think there's two people who've called in. Please press star 3 and that'll show us that you are raising your hand.

So, I'd like to give a little bit of a background about why we're here today and how the journey has been.

It really started in 2019 when City Council directed just to look at creating a digital infrastructure plan. We went to the public with consultations that fall and winter, and we created these working principles, including equity and inclusion as a core part of how we're building out this plan.

We reported to Council on this, and they gave us the go ahead to continue with this work and readily adopted those principles.

2020 was an extraordinary year, and it saw us not only work on the, the policy side of things, but really starting to look at implementation of digital inclusivity and equity projects, such as digital canopy through a donation as well as other initiatives like bringing Wi-Fi to city parks over a couple of weekends last summer. We managed a donation of 500 smartphones through the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services council as well as really digging into some research into who's underserved and why, with five different universities and colleges. So armed with that information and community feedback, we went to City Council earlier this year in 2021 with our report about ConnectTO asking how do we bring high speed Internet to everyone in the city? They approved a multi faced program with some specific phase 1 deliverables, which we want to talk to you about today as well as get your input on and let you know more about the program overall.

So, that's what brought us here today. When Council adopted this in February we started working on this and part of the process, of course, is hearing from the community.

There are a few outcomes we're looking for from the overall program, including digital equity - reducing net costs, especially for those who are vulnerable and underserved. Economic recovery - we're looking for long term fiscal health for the city as well as maintaining the cities technology leadership both in Canada and around the world.

When we looked at the program overall, we realized that there were three main areas of focus and I'll go into them right now.

So the first thing I want to bring to your attention is that we'd like to we're looking at how to bring connectivity as in outcome for the city's residents and businesses. So when we're building and retrofitting affordable housing, thinking about how to embed in connectivity as an outcome at the front, not adding it on at the end. How do we embed more Wi-Fi in public spaces? How do we deploy a dig once policy so that we can have an opportunity to leverage our fibre assets as well as a connectivity assets throughout the city? How do we work with connectivity in our planning processes? Because we realized through the research, and we're hearing from the public, especially over the pandemic that connectivity is a right for everyone. And we want to make sure that everyone has the ability to connect in an effective and affordable way.

The second bucket of work I want to tell you about is the policy development, and we hope to see you more in in future consultations on that as well. We're looking at how digital literacy fits into this picture, because we understand that it's not that simple. It may mean giving somebody a device or helping them get connected. It's really around all of the other things that make that connectivity valuable and meaningful. So, we're also looking at the first digital equity policy for Toronto building on various pieces of work done so far, including data for equity, et cetera and this will fit well, into our digital infrastructure plan work overall.

And the last piece of work I want to tell you about is this, a broadband network and I think that's why many of you are here tonight. It's about how we can leverage city assets - our buildings, our fibre assets, our agency boards' and commissions' fibre assets and other building assets as well as our sidewalks, our trenches, et cetera. How do we leverage these to create an opportunity to work with a partner or partners to have the ultimate goal of expanding Internet access for the underserved?

And to give you some context, for phase 1 deployment scope, we're looking at three locations that are specified in the staff report as well as one more location likely, that was brought to our attention as a Council directive through the Council meeting process.

Really looking at how to provide physical network and connectivity in these areas and will be evaluating the outcome of these sites based on physical connectivity, based on service management as well as testing out the partnership business model.

We'll take this learning, and it's a real learning – we're here to really understand how this will work in the community how this might work for Toronto and we'll take that along with the other research and

assessment and policy development, et cetera and bring recommendations back to Council later this year to inform the future phases.

So, that's where we are today. We're here to gather your thoughts on how to make this phase 1 scope procurement work.

And from a timeline perspective, um, here we are at. Initiating the process and getting the tender documents ready. After that, we'll of course, do the site initiations, hopefully by Q3 of 2021, with a target to report back toward the end of the year.

So, now it's my pleasure to hand it over to my colleague, Michelle, who will tell us more about the sourcing strategy on this.

Okay, thank you. So the city has introduced a strategic procurement approach in terms of how we procure and buy goods and services.

This helps us to deliver and try to gain best value for our taxpayers and improve our supplier relationship.

So, this strategic sourcing procurement approach was introduced back in 2018 when the category management and strategic sourcing team was implemented. So it's, still fairly new, but we've been actively working on different procurements, and we've used the process on several since its introduction into the city.

This negotiated RFP solicitation is issued to obtain bids and proposals where procurement needs are identified. And we really look to suppliers to propose solutions and recommend delivery methods to arrive at a desired outcome is part of the process.

Key features and things that they to be aware of is that it's a non-binding proposal. Negotiations are conducted with the top ranked proponent, or proponents. And these negotiations are conducted 1-on-1, based on the desired key focus areas that we believe need additional discussions in order to try to achieve a successful outcome that's negotiated and could be identified to with the intention for the city to award, just to one entity, but for this particular procurement, I believe the intention is to consider the option of potentially awarding to multiple vendors.

That is something that we may choose to do, and whatever the outcome or the final decision is, it will be articulated in the actual RFP document that would be issued in Ariba for this particular procurement.

Can you move to the next slide Alice? Thanks.

In terms of negotiations, like I said, we've conducted and done this across multiple categories at the city, since category management and strategic sourcing has been implemented. Because of the current environment and climate these negotiations, once a top ranked vendor or vendors are identified, these

negotiations are conducted 1-on-1 with each supplier. We really try to address any key areas that we believe need additional clarity additional discussions.

It's an opportunity for the city as well as the vendor to request supplementary information, to help better inform the actual contract if we're able to successfully arrive at one.

There are several key areas that we often touch on as we go through the negotiations with any IT vendor, so we will often discuss statement of work. For the scope of the services, service level agreements and different targets and measures we'd like to see in terms of performance as well as pricing. Pricing is often one of the key things we look for, but there are also important things from a technology and security standpoint that we discuss at the negotiation table/ So it could be things around privacy, you know, how data's stored where it's stored, et cetera? We have these conversations, and the intention is obviously to arrive at a successful outcome. But if for some reason, we are not able to arrive at the desired outcome successfully with the vendor or vendors, the city may choose to discontinue negotiations and move on to the next best ranked supplier to conduct negotiations with that vendor or vendors.

Next slide. This slide really just shows a very traditional and standard and RFP life cycle process flow.

So, as Alice mentioned, key steps here will be the actual development of the documents. So, all of the particulars that the city is looking for as requirements, the evaluation criteria, evaluation stages, et cetera. Once that document has been finalized and reviewed and approved for publishing, we will submit, we will upload an issue to call. And then all vendors who have registered in system and are under the technology commodity code will receive this particular tender and they'll have visibility to it.

And they have the opportunity to submit their bids and their proposals. Once those bids are submitted, the team will go through the evaluation process. And that evaluation process will be defined in detail in the actual document and there are often multiple stages identified that we follow for evaluating each supplier that makes it to this stage.

We evaluate each supplier's proposal across the evaluation stages and criteria that we've identified. Once we've rank the vendors and we've identified top ranked suppliers, we will move forward to the negotiation stage and conduct negotiations. Hopefully we have a successful outcome and then we will move to actually preparing a report to actually award to get approval to award the contract.

Once we get approval to award, we then advise the vendor and then we work towards executing the actual agreement to get the contract in place.

This slide just provides a little bit more of a deeper level in terms of the details of the evaluation stages. This is not a standard approach for every single call. Each call could look slightly different. It all depends on what we decide as laid out and stated in the actual document.

But traditionally, evaluation process will have several stages. The first stage is traditionally review of the mandatory submission requirements. So these are anything that the city deems absolutely non-negotiable. Things that are essential for us to be able to work with a particular supplier or suppliers.

Once we conduct that mandatory submission evaluation, all the vendors who are compliant will move to the subsequent stage, which is often a technical functional evaluation of different requirements. Now we subsequently move to pricing and then once we've ranked the suppliers, we will move into the negotiation phase.

Once negotiations conclude we will look for approval to award the contract to either one vendor or multiple vendors.

Thank you very much Lawrence, Alice and Michelle, we appreciate the overview of ConnectTO as well as the procurement process. At this point we wanted to allow for a little pause for folks to ask questions, if they have any based on the presentation. So, again, just a reminder there's several ways you can do that.

By typing something into the chat if you're online. Feel free to do that now or if you would like to ask a question, or make a comment, raise your virtual hand please. If you're online, you'll see a literally a little hand in the participants window, and if you are on the phone and you would like to raise your virtual hand, just a reminder, it's star 3 to raise your hand. So I'll just pause for a moment.

So far nothing in the chat. Here we go. So, thank you. The question is what specific step will the city be taking in the near future to know how to organize and mobilize as a community to make publicly funded affordable Internet happen?

Thank you for the question. It's nice to see you here tonight. Hope you're well. So I think the question is what steps have we take to have a publicly funded affordable Internet. What we're trying to achieve today, which is the Council direction given to us, is to work with a partner, so we, the city will be setting out the goals and the mandate of the program.

The city will be directing, after taking in public feedback because of course, we are public servants. We work for the public, we will then set the direction of program overall, but we will not be actually delivering Internet to home, businesses and members of the public. So the idea here is we will work in partnership. We'll develop the way that this will be done. The city will give input. The city's input is our assets and it's the partner who will be actually delivering the Internet to homes. I hope that answers your question.

There is two people with their hands raised. The first person that raised their hand was a caller user with the number…?

There you go. You can go ahead and ask a question.

Thank you. Sure. My question is about the timelines. When, by what point do you expect to have awarded the contract? I asked because it seems that the timelines are very short. I understand the city is going to bring fibre to certain buildings. So contract has to get awarded, the fibre has to get connected, then the company that you've chosen has to connect everybody, and then you want to be reporting to city council before the end of year. So, what are the timelines?

So thank you for the question. I'll try to answer that question. So it depends on negotiations largely as you as you just heard. That's something that we have some control over, but at large, we don't have complete control over, it's based on who submits proposals. The idea is that for this phase 1 of the program we will not be able to do any of the large scale fibre deployment. That will be for the larger future phases. For phase 1, it's quite a contained exercise as a learning experience. The way we'll be starting that learning is to bring a partner in start to see how the connectivity program will work and start testing different models. So to answer your question, I agree with you. There won't be a real opportunity to have a large scale construction initially. That's the ultimate goal of the program overall, but there will not be a full scale construction for phase 1.

Thanks.

There's another attendee with their hand up. You can go ahead and ask your question please.

Thank you. Just like to say, this is Rhea Rinnie, co-chair of the chapter of ACORN. Thank you so much for having us tonight. And also, thank you very much to connect to you and Alice, you guys are wonderful for creating this program. ACORN has been fighting for so long for affordable Internet and we're so pleased when it comes to this. We just have a quick question about where the city stands when it comes to some of our key demands for this Internet program, the first one probably the key one being where do you guys stand, or where does the city stand in general on having a publicly owned and controlled? It would be great to have a city owned ISP. Sometimes that's not feasible, but we're just wondering where you guys stand on the possibility of public ownership and public control over the ISP that delivers the program versus, say, having one of the big companies, like Rogers Bell, or Telus own and control the ISP that will be used.

It's nice to see you here tonight. Thanks for joining in, for the question. And as far as ACORN's demands, I'm familiar with them and appreciate the efforts you put into organizing that.

The way that we are envisioning this partnership is the city will be in control of the outcomes of the partnership if that makes sense. The city is in charge of the direction. The city is setting the mandate, et cetera. I guess what the difference between the program we're envisioning, that we've been given council directive on to explore versus a publicly owned ISP is that it's not solely the city that's delivering the service, right?

We are bringing in a partner or partners, to be able to do that. Um, there was a question earlier about whether or not it's expected to be profitable for the private partner. We are open to any partners to submit a proposal. We don't know if it's going to be for profit or not for profit. That is, we're not putting any requirements around that.

But maybe Lawrence, you can add to that.

Yes, and thank you for the question. Just to separate in terms of the program and the intent of the program, I think the ConnectTO program will still be led and focused by the city of Toronto.

In terms of our focus, it's really ensuring that we can utilize the city's assets and that the city is well-positioned for Internet access and affordability.

So that's where our focus has been in terms of really trying to ensure that we can drive that affordability and concentrate where investment is focused by the industry, into areas that are underserved. In that respect, the ConnectTO program and how that program expands will continue to be led and to be run by the city of Toronto staff. So just wanted to build upon that.

Thank you Lawrence and Alice. We have one other thought in the chat.

I'd like to know, will it be high speed Internet? Because, after we signed up for the Internet, it can be very slow.

Yes, the goal is for high speed Internet and there's a question later on about that. Hope to hear your thoughts then as well.

I think we've got a time for one more question before I go to that. I just want to remind everybody who has their hands raised or ritual hands raised. If you have asked your question, if you can please lower it. And if you're on the phone and wondering how to lower your hand, you press star 3 again.

So, the next person with their hand raised Sharon Over to you, you've got the microphone.

Can you guys hear me? Yes, sweet. Hi, Alice. Hi, thank you so much for arranging this. I do see, like, we have a bunch of ACORN members on the line, so thanks everybody for joining. And we do have some questions in the chat from many ACORN members. It would be great if you guys could reach to those as well. My question was basically the same question, you know, on public control. All the members kind of always wish for something that has a community representation, not being controlled by, like, private, big telecoms, because we've seen how it ends up being. It'd be great if has that public control and community representation and also, affordability I think our members have been aiming for a 10 dollar Internet for a low end, moderate income people that are accessible for everybody because it is essential right now for a lot of people. So, do you guys have any idea on the pricing that you guys might be thinking of?

Nice to see you. In terms of pricing, it's part of the negotiation with the possible partners, so we don't have any specifics at this time. What I can say is the, the goal, whole point of driving the program is for affordability and there will be some questions later on. I don't want to give spoilers, but there will be some questions that are aimed to ask how you'd like it to be funded and how it would be paid for. So I'm happy to have more discussion at that time.

And perhaps we can just wrap this up. There's a couple more things in the chat that I believe what we will likely be discussing a little bit as well.

One of them is that in addition to access to Internet, there will be a need for digital literacy and access. Digital devices, how can we make it accessible? And Scarborough ACORN is asking whether we're going to work with providers that are only with large corporation.

No, I think somebody answered that.

Oh yeah, sorry Alice.

So maybe it's a good time to segue into the information gathering section and I'd like to just quickly let you know that we'll be asking five guided questions with a poll and three more open-ended questions.

But as you can see, here, there are some questions here about eligibility and a model that's appropriate for pricing and billing. So I think a lot of these questions will be answered.

I wanted to also let everybody know that, even though we're, we're going through this pretty quickly and getting everyone's feedback right now. We highly encourage you to go to our website and answer the survey on your own time. It'll be up starting tomorrow for two weeks until June 4th. So there it is right in chat. Thank you very much. The link to our web page is there, and we'll have a survey there. You can give us more thoughts, more information and input into these questions again. So, looking forward to that as well.

Great so the first question is about entities to deliver this model. This has come up already. We want to re-iterate that we are not positioning the city as an ISP at this time. That's not the council direction we've been given, but we are looking to drive filling in the gaps that exist for affordable, high speed Internet in underserved areas. That is absolutely our goal.

Well, you can start the polling if it's open already.

We'll have a few moments for folks to click on the poll, and if we have a minute and a half, so perhaps we can read the items out loud. There are some folks on the phone you won't be able to vote on the poll, but you could hear them.

Right. Do you want me to do that? Or would you like to sure go ahead, Rhonda.

Okay, the first item and answer the question is –
– A is knowledgeable subscribers, students and volunteers from grassroots organizations, and on the job training organization
– B is only well known and trust of Internet service providers under contract through the city.
– C is multiple service providers based on meeting coverage needs across the city as long as they adhere to specific quality of service and privacy requirements.
– D is a duplicate of A, sorry.
– E is a combination of the above.
– F is none of the above or something other that you can suggest.

We'll let people think about that for a few seconds.

Okay, great. I wonder if it's possible to show the results of that poll to everyone.

I apologize. I'm not used to using the polling function, so I'm not sure if folks can see the outcome yet.

In the chat, I recall the question is the city working with small ISP providers only are large corporations exclusively. And so I hope you can see from the question that we're open to all of those options.

In a previous session in earlier today, someone asked if a joint venture or groups of people can also submit a proposal. So, at this time we're open to all sorts of different solutions that can help us solve this issue together. So what seems to be the highest here is multiple service providers based on meeting coverage requirements at 18%.

And pretty tied is combination of these as well as knowledgeable subscribers, students, volunteers from grass-root organizations.

If there's anyone who put in other, I don't know if anyone wants to either put their hand up or put it in the chat so that we can have a full understanding of this item.

Nobody answered other.

That is true. That's true. That's right. But lots of no answers.

I'm still open for any other any other thoughts. I just pause for another moment. This is our first poll so I'm going to give us a little bit of time.

So a caller with the identity, 1416665 has their hand up. Just bear with me one moment.

Hey, Eva. Hey. Two of the questions were identical - A and D - so you should add the results from those two.

Thank you we will do apologies on that. Yeah, no, it wasn't a trick question. That was just one of those things. You're really you paying attention!

You're right, so that that actually brings it to 24%. It's almost a quarter those who've answered their preference for knowledgeable subscribers, students, volunteers from grassroots organizations. So thank you for pointing that out. Somebody is paying attention. That's good. Please keep those coming.

So, Alice, I think we've got time for one more question and then we need to move on. The next person with their hand up is Sharon. Sharon over to you. Do you have a question to us?

Oh no, I think it was from before, but I can just repeat one of the questions from the chat. One of our members just wanted to ask, I think it was Rama. Toronto Community Housing has a partnership with Rogers to offer a 10 dollar Internet. For instance, of course, it is very slow Internet, but better than nothing. So, can the city offer such as service to all people under the poverty line with better speed also offering a cheap computer or tablet? Because I know a lot of our members are also looking for devices from the city. So any thoughts on that.

That's something we definitely are thinking about a lot of the wraparound services we're thinking about, and again, that depends on negotiations with the solicitation that we're about to put out. Right? We don't know exactly what the cost is going to be. There's a question coming up about the, the model for how to pay for this and who should pay for it.

In terms of the devices, as you know, we've been trying to do our best through donations and through other avenues. But that's definitely an area that we are very interested in - doing better in terms of devices – it's one of the things that's been really heartening for us.

We were able to bring some devices through a donation. 500 smartphones were able to go to families and people in need through the Aboriginal Support Services Council, but 500 is not enough obviously so we're definitely looking into how to how to facilitate that better.

I was just going to let you know that time is up for that question and if there's time afterwards, at the end, we can circle back to it, but just in the interest of keeping it moving. Thank you.

Great.

So the second question we'd like to talk about now is which models are appropriate to fund this network? As you may know, we don't have any approved capital operating budget allocated right now to implement and operate the, the broadband network. Our approach is to offer city assets as well as agency boards and commission assets through agreements into this partnership so the community can get the benefit from those assets through that partnership. So, innovative, sustainable funding models will be required for us to ensure fairness for providers and users of an affordable, a reliable service.

There are a few options here as well. Maybe we can start this new poll.
And please, let me know if any of them are duplicated. I'm double checking I don't think I see any right now. We've got another minute and a half on the on there and I'll read them out for those who are listening in.

We are asking you to consider,
- all subscribers fund this equally
- subsidies offered to subscribers of different means.
- sponsorship from businesses
- donations from individuals for businesses
- advertising placement services
- grants or investments from other levels of government.
- A combination of these, or none of these or something else.

Just about 20 seconds left for that poll and then we will close that and have a small discussion. Just like last the last question.

Okay, great. So, in a moment, we'll see the results of that of that particular poll, but maybe if you have some feedback on this question, please raise your hand, or put into the chat.

So we can see that 41% of you overwhelmingly have said a combination of the different options, of the specific options. The top one is subsidies between subscribers of different means.

Grants or investments from other levels of government is also quite a popular one at 19%.

All subscribers equally is at 13%.

I've noticed that people have said other, and they may or may not have elaborated. If that's you please go ahead and let us know publicly. Otherwise we can see the poll and still record your input.

So we have Rama with their hand raised. Rama, if you'd like to go ahead and ask you a question.

Please do you hear me?

We can hear you.

I want to ask a question about free public Wi-Fi because many of the big cities in the offer it to their citizens. So, could we have free public Wi-Fi by the city, in the city in parks facilities and buildings, especially Toronto Community Housing?

So Rama, thank you for that question. Absolutely. We are working on that right now. We're actually deploying to pilot sites of community housing buildings in the next coming two weeks or so, with plans for more this year. Through the 2021 budget, the Mayor has made it a priority for expanding accelerating free public Wi-Fi to close the digital divide, so that's part of my team's work as well. So earlier, if you will recall, we're talking about the three buckets of work? The free public Wi-Fi in city facilities and city buildings is part of our work plan, so we are definitely doing that.

And if you would like more information, please feel free to get in touch with us. We have an email address. You're always welcome to connect with us anytime.

Hi, Alice. Barry has a question in the chat and I'm sorry but I think his hand may have been missed earlier.

This question is just around the sites. Why can't ConnectTO be made available in Etobicoke North? He's asking if the infrastructure to do so could run along the Finch LRT to potentially include Etobicoke North.

So, Barry, that's a good question. We did look specifically at LRT construction. I don't want to disappoint you, but when we explore that option for the part of construction that's going on right now they're already at a high percentage of design completion.

So it's not appropriate for us to intersect with that process right now, but certainly there are other opportunities related to construction from a city perspective. So we are definitely interested in pursuing. Etobicoke North is one of the sites we are looking at right now. It's not named in the three, because we, we don't know for sure exactly where we're going to land.

But I can tell you through the discussions at Council, we took it to heart that the Mayor and Council wanted us to look at areas that are hardest hit by COVID. And certainly Etobicoke North is one of them and we've, we've heard from the community.

So I see a couple of hands raised. Barry, I don't know if you have anything to add. I'll just unmute you.

Hi Barry, you've got the mike did you want to add anything?

Okay.

In Etobicoke North we desperately need internet because of what's happening in Etobicoke North. The pandemic has really affected Etobicoke North in a big way and our community is already not full of a lot of infrastructure.

As a matter of fact, prior to COVID, ACORN had a meeting up here and someone mentioned that there was a 10 dollar/month internet. We had a lot of calls and ACORN had to explain that it was only available to TCHS residents. Something should be done to make sure ConnectTO includes them.

Absolutely, Barry, and it's also our intention to look at Etobicoke North. Through this learning process from phase 1, to look at many other areas of the city, not just this, but we need to have the learning now so that we can go back to Council and ask them to approve a new approach or next steps, I should say.

I just want to advise everyone, we've hit the time limit for this question. There are still two hands raised. I'll leave it to Alice to make the call. Do you want to take one more question on this question? Or do you want to circle back if there's time at the end?

Let's move on to the next question. We may be able to answer them. We definitely want to circle back and hear from everyone.

So the next question is sort of around the types of services this broadband network would offer to end users. We know that services that are comparable to those broadly available in the market are required. We know that we've heard from the community around that, for example 50/10 mbps as a minimum internet speed. I'd like to ask that we start the next poll for what types of services should we consider.

- DSL and cable,
- Fibre to home,
- Building and public Wi-Fi or hot spots, like the way retailers offer in restaurants, hotels or stores,
- A wireless solution, like a high speed, wireless Internet.
- A mobility offer or
- A combination of all these
- Another, something else.

We have about a minute left on that poll. I just want to recognize that there are some questions. There are some comments in the chat around defunding the police, meaning taking away from the police budget. We're noted this as part of the consultation.

And Alejandro, I see that you said you're outdoors right now I'm using yours gigabytes which can be can very expensive? So, yes, we are looking to, push out more free public Wi-Fi in city facilities.

We also have noted that Kiri mentioned that Bell and Rogers perhaps could reallocate some of their profit to provide better service for vulnerable people at low cost. So that's also noted. Thank you for that.

Absolutely. So, just be a moment before we see the results from question number three. Just a reminder we have two more of these sort of guided questions, and then more open questions at the end, three of those questions.

So, on this one, the highest one seems to be a tie between building and public WI-Fi or hotspots and a combination of all of the above.

Some other notable, high scoring ones, or hybrid are fibre to home and there's also some interest for a mobility offer as well as DSL, cable and high speed wireless. So there are also some people who chose other, I don't know if they want to I express those thoughts.

So, Sharon has her hand raised. Sharon, did you have a question or comment?

I don't know why it keeps the hand raised. I didn't really have any questions here.

There were a few questions in the chat that talked about.

I think Ryan as well as Kiri and Alejandro were just mentioning if ConnectTO would be up for something like only big privatized companies or are you guys open to any other community based or non-profit based tech services or ISP providers as well.

We're absolutely open to any proposal, including those that are community based. We've been looking at that ourselves as well in terms what makes sense.

One of the directives we were given is to review what kind of business model should be considered using a feasibility, desirability and sustainability view. So, absolutely or all of those models will be will be reviewed.

And Sharon, and to everybody, just to remind her if you have your hand raised, and you're wondering how to lower it just find your name on the right hand bar just press the hand button activate or de-select it.
I think we have time for one more question for this.

Thank you, thank you for having this meeting. I selected other only because, I think that maybe this has already been discussed. I joined a little bit late and I apologize for that, but there's some significant work involved with bringing internet to someone's building or these wireless solutions, or other options that were presented. There are still some barriers to actually accessing that, in addition to some barriers to education. For instance, providing an open wireless solution, there would have to be some education around how to use a public network et cetera. I'm curious about what ConnectTO's role would be. Does it end at the point where the Internet has been brought to residents, or does it continue through to into the educational piece and also assisting with any sort of barriers, to actually have a device to access the Internet? Thank you.

Thank you for the question and for your very informed thoughts. It's absolutely our intention to do the latter, I suppose, which is to provide the means around digital literacy, digital fluency and support. So that it's not just a matter of so we're connecting somebody, we're giving them a device, et cetera. Part of the outcomes from the digital canopy project we've done, one of the pieces we're most proud of, in addition to providing free public Wi-Fi to many people in the city, is that we were able to start a mentorship program for 15 youth who live in the areas that were selected for digital canopy and they are going through training to become educated in network services, et cetera so that they can bring that knowledge into the community, and help the community use the service.

So this mentorship is coming from leadership right here in the city.
Lawrence and a lot of our senior management team are mentors to the youth. There's an event happening on June 16th, I believe, that's the start of a 16 week program that's going to bring a lot of knowledge and a lot of support to the youth. We want to make that an ongoing program if we can with funding. So absolutely in the future, it's our intention to look for those opportunities. It's our intention to make good on those opportunities.

Thanks for that answer Alice. I think we need to move on to the next question.

Before we start the pull, the question is what models will be appropriate for consideration around end user service invoicing/billing?
One thing we want to think about is we're looking for that innovative and sustainable funding model to be able to move forward with this program. Again, the city's a perspective is let us use these public assets, your assets, through us to be able to work with a partner to bring this service to people who need it.

- Are we thinking about actual cost, less donation equally shared by all subscribers?
- What about net cost shared according to subscribers needs?
- Another option is fix amount with a surplus return to subscribers, like a credit union situation.
- Or a fixed amount with a surplus re-invested into the broadband network coverage for the program overall,
- Or another solution.

While letting the poll take its time, I want to recognize Alejandro's note about access to high speed, low cost Internet to close the economic education divide as it creates opportunities. And so absolutely.

Part of the goals in the very beginning as you may recall is economic opportunities and long term gains to the city that way.

Okay, great. In a moment, we'll see what everybody thought of that.

Okay, so, for this question, 20% of you said, actual costs less donations, or the net cost shared equally by subscribers.

The next selection is fixed amount with surplus amounts reinvested to grow the network.

As well, some support for the other two options, and some support for other. So I wonder if anyone wants to talk about other or give more thoughts about why they support one of these options.

So, I see that Judy has said, depends on overall reason for enabling access.

Ryan has his hand raised. So Ryan, you can go ahead and ask your question or make your comment please.

I was one of the people who put other, just because honestly a lot of those like end user service, pricing and billing, don't really seem to take into account that we're looking for affordable internet and not to get profit. So it's just, I don't know, a lot of these questions seem to lead towards if there's going to be a private partner, and if they give money, they're going to want something out of it. So I just wonder where we end up, will we just be subsidizing a private company> So instead of funding it through the cost of charging the people getting it, because that's already what Rogers and them do, and we're not competing with them. I just put other. Just do it ourselves, ban Rogers for doing business in the city, and take the rest from the police budget again. So I'm just not sure if some of those options aren't just charging people for Internet.

I hear what you're saying, Ryan. It's just the direction given to us by Council is not to create our own. Right? It's our role to bring the outcomes we want which is affordable high speed Internet for the underserved through this partnership model. So what we're trying to do is understand where you are coming from and to be able to inform how to set up that program, but your point to is well taken.

Alice, there's a couple of items in the chat as well. So, Judy mentions, further to what she said earlier, depending on the overall reason for enabling access. She says considering the pandemic, there's a necessity for communications education and the language for so many things that this could be used for, I'm wondering if this is really the way to go. That's what I'm understanding from that and is this what people pay or what the needs for access fill.

Thank you for that Judy. And Kiri says sharing costs among subscribers shares responsibility. As more people join, costs will be reduced for a sustainable service for all. Thank you for that.

We've take a note of those points. Thank you very much. I feel like at the ACORN events you were much more energetic and I feel like I wish we had a chance to see you. But thank you for your patience and for contributing. We really appreciate it and please continue to do.

Just in the interest of time, Alice, I think we need to keep moving along.

Sure. We can always come back to more thoughts on this.

Number 5. We can start the poll, is - how should eligibility for this to be determined? As you know, our goal is to reduce Internet costs for vulnerable and underserved Torontonians through this program. So, we want you to tell us what things we should consider on our system.

- Do individuals and families self-declare need similar to food banks?
- Designated groups only. So prioritizing individuals or families recognized as in need by one or more social services entity?
- Neighborhood based. So everybody in an area, residents and businesses in a neighborhood where the broadband network operates, may receive in service.
- End user services. How to fund the payment is a previous question, so that's a separate issue.
- A combination of these or something else.

While we're waiting for the poll to finish, Barry, I notice you've got your hand raised.

If you're just wondering how to lower your hand on a mobile device, you press star 3.

Okay, great. So in a moment, we'll see where everybody stands on question number 5, and I just want to reiterate, I hope that you and everyone knows that we are certainly taking into consideration ACORN's demands and that's going to be part of how we consider the larger program overall. I don't want you to think that the city is ignoring what you've put forward, but I do appreciate you taking the time to go through it, go through this process with us and giving us your thoughts. Because we very much value those considerations.

Okay, for this one, pretty much tied for neighborhood-based and a combination of the three options. And then after that, so it's 30% in 27% for those two, and then after that is 10% for honour system and 13% for designated groups. As well as, a couple of people had, well at least one person said other. I think exactly one person said other if my math is right.

I wonder if anyone wants to expand on their thoughts on this particular topic around eligibility.

A call in person with the number 41665 has a question. Go ahead and ask your question please.

Hey, I'm the one who answered the other. My point was, if this is to become self-funding since the city has no funding for it, and if it's to also provide below coast service to those who need it, then it needs subscribers who can afford to pay above cost. So that one subsidizes the other. So the network should welcome subscribers from all walks of life.

So, I hear you on that and we'll note that answer. I just want to reiterate the basis the basis of our approach, which is that the city puts in our assets so that we can lessen the capital cost for the end users network provider, right? That's where we believe this can be a win, win situation. So as the city

we're putting in our assets as the fibre backbone hopefully as a contribution for the bigger picture. That's what's actually going to be offsetting costs for the end user, not just other subscribers. We'll be paying more to balance that the less, if you can see my hands. That's the idea is that we would be, you know, the city will be able to enable lower prices by putting in our assets as input.

We have one more hand raised.

We've got just 10 to 15 minutes to go. We're going to have to keep pushing this, so this will be the last question and then we'll move on to the next slide. So you can go ahead and ask you a question.

Thanks again, just two quick clarifying questions on the options. The second option for designated groups. I'm curious, if you could talk about what, one or more social services means. Does that mean that someone must be identified by a sanctioned entity, or could someone demonstrate need through some other means that is not affiliated with any sort of governmental body?

That's my first question. For the third option for neighborhood based
I'm just curious about how would work if this was an option. If this was the option chosen, how would someone who doesn't live in one of these, a designated neighborhoods, get access to this particular service?

Thank you so for your first question. We don't have those entities outlined. This is just to get people talking about what they see as eligibility. I don't know that we're going to go with a government-defined social service entity at all. But the city does administer Ontario Works and ODSP on behalf of the province. So, there have been discussions the past that this is a natural place. We have additional designations and benefits that may be realized through the avenues we already have.

Right the second question. In this case, if the program isn't in that neighborhood, unfortunately, there's no consideration right now for that. It wouldn't be possible for someone to be able to partake in the program if they're not in one of the areas.

But certainly, I just want to reiterate, and I don't think this was your intent, but the phase 1 sites are not the entire program. This is just our learning opportunity to understand more on the community needs like today as well as the market response, et cetera.

Hamish is going to give me the hook, but I'm going to move on to the question number 6, which I more of an open question.

So, you know, what are your expectations as a potential residential or business end user? What might prompt you, or motivate you to partake in this? And on the flip side, what potential reservations and challenges and barriers may exist for you to not participate? So, there's no poll for this one, but I'd like to hear your thoughts.

Alejandro writes reliability is very important.

On the last question, Kiri put a comment that I can share before we move on. Most families who rent, and cannot afford to buy homes should be eligible to receive low cost service. So thank you. We'll note that.

So maybe I can move on to the 7th question which is as a community tech member. I know many of you are wearing multiple hats here tonight.

– What would be your thoughts around types of infrastructure access that you envision would be required to deliver this initiative?

– What constraints, challenges and risks might exist that you want us to know about?

– What immediate action, ongoing support as well as policy decisions from the city would be required or helpful for implementing or expanding the broadband network from your perspective?

Okay, for question two. Apologies for my kids in the background. My question is about infrastructure. So we're bringing the Internet to residents of the city, but I feel like the issue is how it gets into homes. Whether that's through a wireless system, the infrastructure within buildings, for example is older. Wiring, cabling, or even just for signals to pass through different construction materials. It's one thing to say that we will bring it there, but I think when it gets to the location, there will be some significant challenges in terms of how it will reach people consistently. I'm sure you're already looking into that, but that that's just one thing that I thought was worth mentioning here.

Awesome. Thank you.

Sylvia says that she'd like to take some time to think about this one, and will fill in the link. That is music to my ears, if you will share your thoughts in the survey at the link. I'd like to encourage everyone to consider filling out the survey when it opens up tomorrow. It will be up for two weeks. Tell your friends, tell everybody, we want to hear from everyone, on their thoughts on this.

So please, please if you have the time, fill out the survey and it would really help us hear your thoughts.

Rama has his hand raised, but I'm going to suggest we move on to the question. And Rama keep your hand raised and then you can be the first to speak after this question has been asked.

Okay, so our last question is the evening, thank you so much for your patience so far. This relates to one of the directives we've been given is, you know, looking at the desirability, feasibility and sustainability of different business models for municipal broadband delivery. It goes on to say, including, but not limited to cooperatives, non-profits, joint ventures or public private partnerships. It gives us the ability to issue any solicitations as desired.

So, I want to pose this to the group - about the business model for the broadband network in general and invite you to give your thoughts.

I'm sorry Rama is first.

The first thing I wanted to say in response to the question you had. Before the first question, I think fibre optics nowadays in the work is probably the most at once, so I think the infrastructure should focus on fibre optics and higher speed. And I believe that speeds less than 50 megabytes per second for downloads and 10 megabytes per second for upload is not acceptable. I mean, right now in community housing, they have very low speed, so I think people want the higher speed that's available nowadays, thank you.

Absolutely, that's noted.

In our in our research with Ryerson University, we did a survey with 2500 people in Toronto, and we found 38% of them did not have the 50/10 speed, which was quite a high percentage. So I take your point even at that speed it is not enough, there is definitely a digital divide in Toronto.

Of course, we're also thinking about sustainability of this program.
Wanting it to be sufficient for not just for today, but for the future.

A few comments in the chat. Judy mentions that ads are predatory. Ruth suggests consulting the network of the existing companies. And there's a thought around joint ventures as not being considered as people are skeptical of private to public partnerships as it is.

So, Ryan, we can chat more about this as well, but what we mean by joint ventures is not a venture capitalist arrangement. It's a situation or program, something like what we've done with other utilities or assets.

There's one more raised hands. Sorry, one just came in from a call-in user…

Hey, how many trial buildings are we looking at for phase 1? The city is going to bring fibre to a building to make this happen, correct? So, how many buildings are you thinking? Obviously you haven't decided, but in general terms, how much.

So, we don't have any specific numbers. It also depends on how the negotiable RFP turns out, right? But the idea is, it's not going to be the entire neighborhood as defined, you know, in the planning sense of neighborhoods. So, it's going to be a specific area, maybe a, a block or a cluster of buildings for each of the three to four sites.

Great. Thanks Alice. Great.

I don't see any more hands up, or any comments in the chat. We have one minute left. I wonder if anybody have any last thoughts they want to put into the chat.

We'd love to you to hear from you. One more time, we invite you to visit our webpage or email us. You may wish to fill out the survey, taking your time, or encourage others who may be interested or have some thoughts on this to fill it out themselves.

To those on the phone who have called in, thank you. If you can't visit the website, you can email us at digitalfeedback@toronto.ca or we can send you the link. Again it's digitalfeedback@toronto.ca.

Thanks Hamish. I just want to quickly personally think everybody for taking their time. It's really nice to connect with you. And I'll hand it over to Lawrence, our Chief Technology Officer.

Thank you. Very much Alice. And, uh, thank you everyone for participating. It's been great to listen to the feedback and have your engagement. Also thank you to all my colleagues who invested a lot of time to make this happen. Thank you so much for working so diligently.

Your feedback in terms of the public is so important to help inform us. I hope we'll continue to receive your feedback through the email site that Alice has mentioned. So, with that have a good evening and I hope everybody enjoys the wonderful weather that's outside. Thank you.