

No York Region hot spots for laptops yet

Smaller wireless zones under consideration

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If you live in York Region and own a laptop, don't throw away your cables yet, because a wireless network is a little ways off.

Toronto Hydro Corp. announced earlier this week it will be introducing "municipal Wireless-Fidelity", also known as WiFi, to the city.

By mounting small receiving and transmitting gadgets on street

lamps to catch and pass along Internet radio waves, subscribers can be online anywhere in the city without having to find an outlet, making downtown Toronto an Internet hot spot.

"This is the beginning of something and I applaud Toronto for going wireless," Markham Regional Councillor Jim Jones said. "We should see what we can do to be a part of this."

Although the idea has been tossed around by municipalities, some think it is the private sector's responsibility, he added.

No official plans to bring wireless networking into York Region

are in the works, but Mr. Jones hopes it won't be long before it is considered.

"We have been keeping an eye on this but we aren't taking any action. That's at the present, but we all know things change."

"This is not an information technology issue but an economic issue," he said. "We have to get

communications costs down to compete with other countries and offer citizens better, low cost services."

Mr. Jones has been introducing a project called York One that would combine the use of fibre and wireless access to connect municipalities, libraries, schools and organizations in the region.

Each would be able to access the same databases and information, making the communities connected. But some municipalities are still leery of the idea.

Paul Ferguson, president of Newmarket Hydro Ltd., said his company has no plans to make the

whole town a hot spot, but has talked about offering wireless Internet services in some public places, such as a library.

"We have been keeping an eye on this but we aren't taking any action," he said. "That's at the present, but we all know things change."

Right now, this is considered a well-wired community with Internet access provided by Rogers and Bell.


After judging the market acceptance and demand, there is not a need for it here yet, Mr. Ferguson said.

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