

TECHNOLOGY: Lone proposal rejected by Whitchurch-Stouffville council

Rural high-speed Internet solution 'elusive'

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RuralWave's proposal to provide high-speed Internet access to Whitchurch-Stouffville's rural residents was turned down by council.

Along with financial concerns with the submission, Whitchurch-Stouffville's technical consultant, Actionable Intelligence, also had reservations with RuralWave's proposed mesh network and telecommunications tower.

"A solution seems to be elusive," said Councillor Ken Ferdinands during Tuesday afternoon's council

meeting.

Mr. Ferdinands has been leading the charge for rural residents to have high-speed Internet access for a number of years.

Council will also be asking the province to consider revising its Rural Connections Broadband program regulations to help address the unique requirements of challenging projects, such as Whitchurch-Stouffville's.

Earlier this year, Whitchurch-Stouffville received \$262,978 from the program to put towards the construction of three towers, maxi-

mum, and one repeater station. The remaining two-thirds of the project cost was to be paid for by the ISP.

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In follow-up conversations with the ISPs, proposals were not submitted because the companies were concerned about the project's completion deadline of March 2012, according to Rebecca Mustard, economic development officer for the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

"While timelines represent one project constraint, funding and technology solutions for the challenging characteristics of the project area are constraints that staff continue to discuss with the province," Ms Mustard wrote in her

June 21 report to council.

"I don't think we can let it go and say wireless is impossible to solve," Mr. Ferdinands said.

Town staff have been directed to contact Bell Canada and any other ISPs for assistance.

So far, the project has cost the municipality \$4,600, which staff hope to recover from the province.

Normally the Rural Connections Broadband program covers these costs once an RFP has been issued, according to Ms Mustard.



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