

SWIFT Broadband Expansion In Dufferin

FAQs

1. Where did the infrastructure mandate come from? Is there protection for smaller independent ISPs who are funding the most capital-intensive projects from the bigger companies? Specifically, the Horning's Mills rural projects are multi-million dollar projects that are not necessarily profitable and therefore will take time to profit on that project compared to the Bell project. How are you protecting the smaller ISPs from the bigger companies who may come in and buy-out the project?

The SWIFT model allows ISPs to compete on a dollar-for-dollar basis. This is achieved in two ways;

1. the RFP is set up in such a way as to limit the maximum size of any single proposal in order to avoid a larger ISP simply buying the bid.
2. The evaluation of the proposals are done by comparing the proposed outcomes (premises passed and KMs of fibre) on a per funding dollar requested basis. This allows us to compare a large proposal and a small proposal on equal footing. There is no benefit given to the larger proposal.

2. What happens to areas that are not on the current list?

Unfortunately, areas not on the current list will not be serviced through this round of the project. Should there be future rounds of SWIFT, there is the potential that other areas will be serviced. There is also potential for a service provider to expand off of an open line being put in through SWIFT in an effort to expand service to other areas.

3. What are SWIFT VS Satellite Communications? Would there be any cost savings or benefits for our rural communities?

The SWIFT model does not allow for funding of satellite-based broadband services for two reasons.

1. The coverage area and capacity of a satellite-based system are hard to quantify at the micro level (per municipality) and
2. The funding required for satellite-based systems is beyond the scope and budget of SWIFT.

SWIFT has awarded wireless projects outside of Dufferin County. However, there were no valid wireless proposals in Dufferin County.

In terms of cost savings and benefits for the rural communities, other than the cap internet fees through the SWIFT project at approximately \$115/month.

4. How does 5G play a role with SWIFT?

SWIFT will fund wireless as well as wireline projects. As such, 5G projects are eligible under our current funding model. More importantly however, 5G is heavily dependent on the availability fibre backhaul. By building more fibre in rural areas, SWIFT is facilitating the expansion of 5G services (both cellular and fixed wireless)

5. Is Swift rural broadband different from Manitoba's Swift? Under the universal broadband fund, will SWIFT help to level the playing field, with consumers high cost service charges?

SWIFT Rural Broadband is different from Manitoba's Swift. For this round of SWIFT, the fees are capped to keep things affordable.

Manitoba's SWIFT is a private Internet Service Provider (ISP) much like Bell, Rogers, etc.

SWIFT is not part of the UBF. The UBF is a federal broadband program that, currently, does not fund regional projects like SWIFT.

6. Will this project tie into project in other Counties? i.e. Grey County?

The Dufferin County project does tie in with Wellington County's project via Orton. In this situation, the original procurement came in for the Dufferin project and it only included service on the North side of the road because the South side is not in Dufferin County. There were some funds left over from Wellington County's project to provide service to the Wellington side of Orton. There is nothing limiting connection in the future days, but the way the procurement was set up for this particular project was Dufferin County specific.

7. How many towers and do the maps show these tower locations?

There are no wireless providers/towers at this point. The map shows lines where the fibre is going to be installed.

8. Where can we get information on program specifics (i.e. fibre versus cellular and expected dates of installation)? The website currently seems to just give an overview

More information can be found here: <https://swiftruralbroadband.ca/projects/approved-projects/>
This website will be kept up-to-date with the most recent information.

9. Are businesses/ farms/ homes able to connect to fiber that is being installed through this project if they are located slightly off of the connected areas?

Landowners can contact the ISPs directly to see if they would extend and the projected cost. Landowners might also consider obtaining a tower connecting to the fiber line once it is installed.

10. Was there pressure on Ontario Hydro providing low cost rental of poles? This would reduce cost dramatically compared to underground

County Councilor Creelman has brought it up numerous times at the County level. Cost is a fraction of what it cost to bury. The County has forwarded motions to the Province asking Ontario Hydro to open the accessibility of their poles for this critical infrastructure, but have not heard anything back yet.

Kyle Seeback's comment and response: have done it in New Brunswick and massively reduce the cost of the project. The cost of bearing fibre and other things and work really hard to get the provincial government to recognize the urgency of this and put pressure on Ontario Hydro. Rural municipalities should try to amp up the pressure on the provincial government on this.

11. Are there any media coverage or videos for SWIFT Rural Broadband?

The newsroom section of the website has media coverage:
<https://swiftruralbroadband.ca/newsroom/>

12. Has there been any discussion about providing subsidies to households with lower median household incomes? (whether that be municipal/provincial or even federal?)

It's not part of the SWIFT program, however, it is something that can be brought up to the County table.

13. There are a number of areas who are not eligible for fiber this time around who have terrible internet - what are our options?

Provide information on what is currently available to SWIFT. If we can confirm that it is not possible to provide

Warden White: Melancthon is always actively trying to either confirm or to spell service levels in areas that are in otherwise ineligible for SWIFT funding. One thing in Melancthon that council is doing and they have modify the tower protocol and things to allow specifically smaller ISPs to come in and do what they need to do to provide internet services. From the bigger picture, the second phase of SWIFT in both lower and upper levels of government it is been suggested that to make the standards a little higher for the second phase go higher than the 5010, which would open up more funding opportunities federally and provincially. Also, makes those service areas non-existent in many places and substantially smaller in other places for instance in Melancthon all those areas that considered serviced under SWIFT 1.0 is fully open for SWIFT 2.0. When those projects go to procurement it will allow other companies to bid on those new areas also allow companies in SWIFT 1 to reevaluate those areas and see if now some of the project is thought about would still work where SWIFT 2.0 is continuing.

14. Do we have a timeline for SWIFT projects?

The timeline can be found: <https://swiftruralbroadband.ca/projects/approved-projects/>

15. Will internet service costs come down with internet becoming more and more of a necessity? Will SWIFT infrastructure put pressure on those service providers in terms of cost?

ISPs are limited to charging \$115/mo for a 50/10 (50Mbps download/10Mbps upload) for a period of 7 years after the network goes live. There is some room for inflation in that amount. However, most ISPs have set the monthly rate much lower than this maximum amount.

SWIFT does not have the ability to set rates of ISP projects outside of the SWIFT project.

16. Has SWIFT had discussions with developers that are "moving north" into the county, about how they can assist in potentially subsidizing SWIFT projects to reach "the last mile" to get to some of the outliers? This may not be a SWIFT mandate, however that discussion should happen (through municipality or townships)

The criteria for the SWIFT funding did not allow for the providers to hold premises for future developments or developments that were not completed. There are a couple examples in London area where developments have been completed recently and are being included at the discretion of the ISP in the project at no additional cost. Discussions like this have been facilitated through SWIFT. It is not part of the mandate but willing to work with developers to expand service further.

17. Swift is funding the various ISP's to bring internet to the curbside. However, are there any controls in place on bringing the fibre from the curbside to the home- especially in light of the fact that a rural curbside can be quite distant from the home?

No, SWIFT is helping facilitate the backbone and individual connection have to be negotiated.