

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

Our File/N/Réf.
Your File/V/Réf.

DATE 19 June 1998

TO/DEST. Co-ordinator
Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee

FROM/EXP. Planning and Development Approvals Commissioner

SUBJECT/OBJET **OTTAWA COMMUNITY NETWORK**

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

That the Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee recommend Council approve the expenditure of \$147,000 towards the Ottawa Community Network (OCN) project in accordance with the attached report entitled “OCN Project and Initiatives Expenditures for 1998” submitted by the Ottawa Community Network.

BACKGROUND

Regional Council approved on May 13, 1998 the Capital Budget for Project 912-13408 “Economic Planning and Development”. Among the activities planned for 1998 under this project was support for the Ottawa Community Network (OCN).

The attached report highlights the achievements of the OCN since its inception in 1997. OCN is a Partnership among many public sector, health and academic organizations. OCN is not only about the hardware of technology, but also a process of bringing people from all sectors to work together to determine needs and work towards solutions. The overall project involves technology experts, educators, health professionals, cultural institutions, government administrators and the private sector.

The OCN project is of significant importance to the Region as future economic benefits will go to regions throughout Canada and the World that install broadband networks, make these networks connect to reach maximum coverage and develop applications to run on these networks.

The RMOC and this region in particular are well positioned to take a leadership role and to organise its resources and the community to make the “wired city” a reality in Ottawa-Carleton.

The Planning & Development Approvals Department has reviewed the request for expenditure of funds from the OCN and concurs with the work plan and activities proposed. The Department will play a coordinating role on the Electronic Government Services part of the OCN Project.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The total expenditures proposed are \$147,000.00

Funds are available in account 912-13408

	\$
Approved Budget:	1,512,000
Total Paid and Committed:	<u>(527,634)</u>
Balance Available:	984,366
THIS REQUEST:	<u>147,000</u>
Balance Remaining:	<u>837,366</u>

*Approved by
N. Tunnacliffe*

DBJ/

FINANCE DEPARTMENT COMMENT

Funds are available as indicated.

*Approved by T. Fedec
on behalf of the Finance Commissioner*

OCN Project and Initiatives Expenditures for 1998

submitted by

The Ottawa Community Network

Purpose

This report outlines the Ottawa Community Network(OCN) initiatives for 1997 and 1998. Included are milestones and initiative expenditures for the fiscal year 1998.

Introduction to the OCN

The OCN is a consortium of local organizations founded in 1997 and dedicated to the advancement of telecommunications applications. Its mandate is to develop a comprehensive telecommunications strategy for linking schools, universities, hospitals, businesses and government agencies into one powerful, integrated broadband network. The goal of the OCN is to position Ottawa-Carleton strategically for economic development that will ultimately yield an improved quality of life for all of its citizens. In doing so, it also seeks to ensure that Ottawa-Carleton is a global leader in networked applications.

The OCN includes the following partners:

- The Ottawa-Carleton Research Institute (OCRI)
- The Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton
- Communications Research Centre
- Carleton University
- Ottawa Life Sciences Council
- Algonquin College
- Ottawa-Carleton Board of Education
- Communications and Information Technology Ontario(CITO)
- Ottawa Economic Development Corp

Through its connection with OCRI, the OCN also collaborates with Bell Canada, Nortel, Newbridge, Mitel, Telesat, the University of Ottawa, Carleton University, and the National Research Council.

The primary focus of the OCN is on the development of broadband telecommunications applications. The OCN's direct involvement in this activity consists of:

- *Definition:* working with partners to identify applications that are strategically significant, technically feasible and economically viable
- *Operationalization:* developing business plans and funding proposals that will move the proposed application from the status of a "bright idea" to practical implementation.
- *Coordination:* aligning the activities of partners collaborating on development and implementation.

Achievements to Date

The OCN project was launched in April of 1997. Since its inception, it has achieved the following results:

- A Steering Committee has been formed consisting of senior level representatives from various public sector institutions.
- An OCN community stakeholder's vision session was held at RMOC in April of 1997. The six workshops at this session attracted a total of 150 participants.
- As a result of the visioning exercise, four working groups were formed to address the application of telecommunications to: education, health, government and business.
- The working groups held subsequent sessions of their own to identify significant applications that should be pursued on behalf of the region.
- Partnership agreements were developed with OCRIInet, the Communications Research Centre (CRC) and Bell Canada.
- An Internet website was developed and has been maintained as an information clearing house for OCN members and supporters.
- Promotional material has been developed introducing the OCN and explaining its objectives.
- A project management capability has been put in place to oversee ongoing applications development in all four sectors: Government, Business, Education and Health..
- The OCN has overseen the development of a comprehensive proposal to the Ontario government's Technology Access Partnerships program. The first proposal (submitted in the autumn of 1997) was a request for \$1.8M, however, due to a lack of funding OCN was asked to resubmit a modified version. This proposal (which focuses on teletourism) was submitted on June 1, 1998 and the outcome is now pending.
- OCN organized a conference called "*Building Broadband Communications in Ontario*" with some 350 participants in March, 1998.

Activities for Fiscal 1998

In keeping with its mandate, the OCN will continue working on the definition, operationalizing and implementation of broadband applications. In the coming year, with the Region's contribution, the OCN intends to focus on the following applications:

Teletourism

One of OCN's working groups, (The Electronic Government Services Committee) identified a need for a comprehensive point of service focusing on tourism and community-related information in the Ottawa-Carleton region. As a result of the consultations, an application has been defined with the following characteristics:

- feature-rich Online interactive tourism services;
- optimal use of broadband technology and capabilities;
- ability to build the community by allowing local groups to deliver information and services in a dynamic and interactive way;

- commercial viability as well as sustainable over the long term.
- potential as an “igniter” of new types of industries;
- ability to strengthen and enhance existing economic sectors such as tourism/hospitality.

Tourists and business people travelling to Ottawa will be able to use the teletourism Online Guide to plan their stays, make reservations or purchase tickets. In addition, an enhanced and feature-rich broadband Online Guide will benefit local residents who will have access to information about their community on a daily basis.

This information will include entertainment (movies, plays, concerts, and sporting events), hospitality (hotels, restaurants, transportation), attractions (museums, public buildings, parks, recreational facilities). It will also include information about organizations in the community (community associations, educational institutions, public libraries, sporting groups, scouts, volunteer groups, religious organizations etc.).

Local businesses (hotels, restaurants, entertainment outlets), will have a powerful way of reaching their target audiences through a single, comprehensive point of service where they can post their offerings and through which they can take reservations and make bookings. This could ultimately prove to be a far more cost-effective way of promoting and delivering their services than the many channels they currently use.

The teletourism application can also serve as a vehicle for local community groups that wish to provide information and services to residents of the region. This will be a place where they can announce events, meetings, sports or concert competition results, and perform various other local functions such as community chat.

Teletourism has been selected for the first phase in OCN’s developmental strategy since it has so far developed the most compelling business case. It is a collaborative project involving OCRI, the Ottawa Tourism Convention Authority (OTCA), the Ottawa Citizen, ShopperCity.Com, the Community Foundation of Ottawa-Carleton, Algonquin College and Carleton University.

The OCN has spearheaded an application to the Ontario Technology Access Partnerships program for \$670,000 to assist in development of the teletourism application. In addition, partners in the development of this application have pledged in-kind contributions worth a similar amount.

The Professional Development Channel

The OCN’s working group on business has identified a need for a broadband network to serve the professional development needs of high technology companies in the Ottawa-Carleton region. The network will provide companies with a broad range of services such as:

- Access to interactive planning tools

- Just in time training
- Information about best practices and benchmarking
- An online marketplace where businesses can meet, exchange ideas and form partnerships
- Marketing assistance to help businesses promote themselves and their offerings to clients

A demonstration of the potential inherent in this capability was offered on June 4, 1998, when OCN partnered with Nortel to deliver an enhanced webcast to desktops throughout the region. The webcast included professionals describing the experience of starting spin off businesses from established companies. The event showed how networks can be used to deliver integrated live video and audio, powerpoint slides, chat and threaded discussion groups.

Plans call for the development of a business model for this service that will be self-sustaining and ultimately profitable. Current thinking envisages subscription fees for access to the services.

Regional Government Services

OCN will be working directly with the RMOC in the coming year to define and develop Regional applications involving

- (a) improved use of information technology within the RMOC administration;
- (b) use of information technology to improve service delivery to the public.

Among the regional functions that could be supported by improved telecommunications networks are:

- Posting of official documents for public examination;
- Facilitation of applications, permits and licenses;
- Delivery of information to the public about government services, municipal waste management, and social services;
- Payment of fines and taxes;
- The use of GIS technology in public transport, emergency services, development tracking and building projects.

The OCN will work closely with RMOC officials to examine the potential and develop an appropriate developmental strategy in this area.

Funding Strategy

Regional funding will be used to leverage additional funding from other sources. RMOC's contribution is intended as seed money that will be used to identify and define compelling new broadband network applications that have a strategic significance for economic development in Ottawa. As these applications are defined, the OCN will approach other

sources of funding (partners, the Ontario government, Industry Canada, Canarie, Stenor etc.) Altogether it is expected that OCN will be able to leverage the grant of \$147,000 into about \$1.5 million for the coming year.

Milestones

The following milestones are integral to OCN's action plan for the coming year:

Milestone	Timing
Creation of New Business Application Groups	Summer 1998
Co-development of Applications with RMOOC	Ongoing
CANet submission	July 3
Second Professional Development Channel Webcast	Autumn, 1998
Development of the third Proposal to TAP	Autumn, 1998
Implementation of Teletourism Initiative	Starting in October 1998
Development of Centralized Media Resource Centre	Ongoing

Expected Benefits

- Maintain position of RMOOC at the leading edge of telecommunications implementation in community.
- Development of local infrastructure: enhanced capacity
- Stimulate demand for telecommunications
- Increased productivity and competitiveness
- Stimulate local economic activity
- Attract new business (tourists, external partners)

Roles and Responsibilities

With extensive expertise in telecommunications engineering, the OCN's Executive Director, Paul Wilker, will lead the identification, operationalizing and development of new network applications. He is assisted by Carol Sage, Director for OCN and New Media Initiatives, whose experience with a wide range of community based organizations will be brought to bear in her role of maintaining liaison with partners and other key institutions in the community.

The Executive Director reports to the OCN Steering Committee who direct activities and identify potential applications in their sectors.

The Steering Committee membership includes:

Gerry Turcotte	President CRC
John ApSimon	President Carleton University
Robert Gillett	President Algonquin College
Herb Kreling	Regional Councilor RMOC
C. Merv Beckstead	Chief Administration Officer RMOC
Ken Lawless	Executive Director Ottawa Life Sciences
Peter Leach	President CITO
Kyle Murray	Director of Education Carleton Board of Education
Bill Collins	President OCRI
Victoria Dickenson	Senior Adviser, IT National Museum of Science and Technology
Brian Barge	Ottawa Economic Development Corporation
Barb McNally	Vice-President OCRI
Paul Wilker	Executive Director, OCN
Alan Aitken	Executive Director OCRIInet

Application of Funds

The Regional Government funding will be used to cover the costs associated with the following activities:

Applications development: time and expenses involved in meeting with business and technical experts as well as user groups, to identify promising applications, test technical and economic feasibility, articulate a development plan, and initiate implementation. Meeting with key community organizations, aligning objectives, securing participation and canvassing support for OCN projects. Included is the development and writing of funding proposals.

Application Pilots & Implementation: the time and expenses involved in working with partners to implement the teletourism and professional development channel projects and to pilot components within the applications.

Administration: The time and expenses involved with the coordination of the Steering Committee and office expenses related to the projects.

Communication, promotion and marketing: the time and expenses involved in preparing promotional materials and making presentations to key stakeholders and potential supporters. It also includes liaison with community networks throughout the Province.

The financial breakdown for the above activities is:

Application Development	75,000
Application pilots and implementation	50,000
Administration	12,000
Communications	10,000
TOTAL	147,000

Service contributions

Communication Research Centre for the use of servers - \$20,000

OCRIInet networking contribution - \$300,000

Funding request pending

TAP proposal to the Province of Ontario - \$647,000

Funding request in development

Canet II -\$100,000 (Due July 3)

Paul Wilker, Executive Director
Ottawa Community Network