

More King homes will have internet access

By Mark PavilonsEditorLocal Journalism Initiative

More than 2,000 King Township homes will have increased internet access, thanks to improvements by Bell's Wireless Home Internet service. The service will be available to approximately 29,000 residences in York Region by the end of the year, including about 2,500 homes in King Township. Customers can check availability of the service at their home at Bell.ca/FastInternet. The site is continually updated as the service is expanded into new areas. Bell vows to reach additional 80,000 homes by the end of 2020 and enhanced 50/10 speeds will be available to 350,000 homes. "Bell's Wireless Home Internet has been a game changer for Canadians in rural communities, bringing full broadband Internet access to traditionally underserved areas and regions previously unserved by any carrier," said Mirko Bibic, president and CEO of BCE Inc. and Bell Canada. "The Wireless Home Internet program is fully funded by Bell but also enabled by a federal government policy environment that fosters investment in critical network infrastructure. With COVID-19 underscoring the critical importance of high-speed Internet access for Canadians everywhere, and government support for enhanced investment, Bell is dedicating even more resources into expanding and enhancing our WHI network rollout to rural Canada." On Aug. 15, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry Navdeep Bains issued a statement regarding wholesale Internet rates set by the CRTC last year that are currently under review. Minister Bains made it clear the CRTC's rates could "undermine investment in high-quality networks, particularly in rural and remote areas." He added that "incentives for ongoing investment, particularly to foster enhanced connectivity for those who are unserved or underserved, are a critical objective of the overall policies governing telecommunications, including these wholesale rates." King council and staff have been adamant proponents of providing increased service to all of King. Council recently okayed staff recommendations to provide in-kind support to YorkNet and other providers who are applying for the Improving Connecting in Ontario (ICON) program. "Staff will continue being actively engaged and proactive in supporting improved internet service in King through the ICON program and other potential future funding programs." Bell is on track to deliver WHI coverage to almost 50% of its target footprint by the end of 2020 with service for an additional 80,000 rural homes. More than 350,000 homes will have immediate access to enhanced 50/10 Internet access speeds (50 Megabits per second download/10 Mbps upload). Exclusive to Bell, the innovative WHI service leverages Bell's fibre and wireless networks to efficiently deliver broadband Internet access to smaller towns, rural communities and other hard-to-reach locations. WHI is already available to approximately 400,000 households in Ontario and Québec and is expected to ultimately reach a million homes in Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Québec, Ontario and Manitoba. In response to COVID-19, Bell accelerated its WHI rollout plan to 137,000 more locations than originally planned. In July, Bell also announced it was doubling WHI download speeds to 50/10 this fall for approximately 300,000 homes and beginning our rollout in Atlantic Canada. "We built WHI specifically to meet the needs of communities that have been tough to serve with traditional wireline and wireless connections, including the capacity for future upgrades that capitalize on innovations in 5G wireless as necessary spectrum becomes available," said Stephen Howe, Bell's Chief Technology Officer. "At the same time, we're also continuing to roll our all-fibre network - the world's fastest Internet technology - into more suburban and rural regions across Manitoba, Ontario, Québec and the Atlantic provinces. Together, Bell's fibre and WHI networks are advancing how Canadians connect with each other and the world, no matter where they may live."