

# SWIFT Announces \$19M In Broadband Improvements For Essex County

October 30, 2020

- Essex County to receive \$19 million in broadband upgrades to support five fibre-to-the-home projects.
- More than 5,000 households to see improvements in broadband internet services throughout the municipalities of Essex, Kingsville, Leamington and Lakeshore.
- Construction to be fully completed by Fall of 2022.

**(Essex County, ON) October 30, 2020** – Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) today announced it has awarded contracts to expand high-speed fibre-optic broadband services to 5,173 households and businesses across 20 communities in Essex County.

“SWIFT continues to remain focused on implementing it’s Southwestern Ontario broadband expansion plan to drive economic growth across our region,” said David Mayberry, SWIFT Board Chair. “Today’s newly announced fibre projects will provide greater access to high-speed services to bring increased employment opportunities and significant economic benefits to Essex County.”

“High speed internet is a necessity not a luxury in our digital world and today’s announcement will provide it to more than 5,000 additional properties in Essex County. This investment in crucial connectivity recognizes the essential role that fast and reliable internet plays in attracting investment, encouraging innovation and creating opportunities for education and economic prosperity,” said Warden Gary McNamara, Essex County.

SWIFT has awarded \$8.5 million in federal and provincial funding to improve high-speed internet connectivity throughout the municipalities of Essex, Kingsville, Leamington and Lakeshore. In total Essex County will receive \$19 million in broadband upgrades, including more than \$10.5 million in contributions from the internet service providers, to support five fibre-to-the-home projects.

Cogeco Connexion has been awarded funding to support three fibre-to-the-home projects. The newly awarded projects will collectively service 207 kilometres of underserved roadway throughout Essex County to bring high-speed internet to 3,687 homes and businesses within the municipalities of Essex, Kingsville and Leamington. The projects represent a collective total investment of \$13.3 million and will be completed with service available by late 2022.

“We are more than thrilled to participate and support the towns of Essex and Kingsville, as well as the Municipality of Leamington, to offer a powerful, reliable and affordable Fibre network to their respective residents and businesses. With this joint commitment with SWIFT, we will together contribute to the Government’s goal to

accelerate high-speed internet access to all Ontarians. Moreover, we are proud of this major announcement as part of our four-year commitment to invest more than \$1 billion in the operation and expansion of our robust broadband network,” said Michel Blais, Vice President, Network, Operations and Technology Delivery, Cogeco.

TekSavvy Solutions will receive funding to support two fibre-to-the home projects to deploy 52 kilometres of fibre-optic line within the Town of Lakeshore. Representing a collective total investment of \$5.8 million, the new fibre networks will provide high-speed internet service to 1,486 households by late 2021.

“TekSavvy has been working with SWIFT and local governments to build out the high speed internet infrastructure across Southwestern Ontario,” said Charlie Burns, Chief Technology Officer, TekSavvy. “We are very excited to be working with SWIFT on the initiatives in Essex County and look forward to continuing together as we expand Fibre to the Home access for Canadians throughout 2021.”

Collectively the awarded projects will service nearly 260 kilometres of underserved roadway to deliver high-speed fibre connectivity to many more residents living in Essex County.

“SWIFT continues to work quickly to advance broadband expansion across Southwestern Ontario. In Essex County 40% of network build is scheduled to be completed within the next 12 months with construction slated to begin later this year,” said Barry Field, SWIFT Executive Director. “The rollout of these new fibre-optic projects will deliver reliable broadband to many more locations throughout the County to provide residents with increased access to essential high-speed services.”

Today’s newly announced projects are part of SWIFT’s \$209 million broadband expansion plan that aims to bring better broadband access to approximately 50,000 underserved homes and businesses across Southwestern Ontario.

**Additional Information:**

[Essex County Project Overview](#)

**About SWIFT**

Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) is a non-profit regional broadband project initiated by the Western Ontario Wardens’ Caucus to subsidize the construction of high-speed broadband networks across Southwestern Ontario, Caledon and the Niagara Region.

The project was approved for funding up to \$127.4 million under the New Building Canada Fund – Small Communities Fund (NBCF-SCF), a joint federal and provincial infrastructure funding program, and leverages additional funding from municipal partners and private sector investors to bring the total project investment to \$209 million to improve access to broadband services across the region.

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