

# Cellular Service Improvement Options

Current State

# Agenda

- Background
- Relationship Between Broadband and Cellular
- Tower Applications
- Provider Discussion Summary
- Advocacy Strategy and Communications
- Funding Impacts

# Background

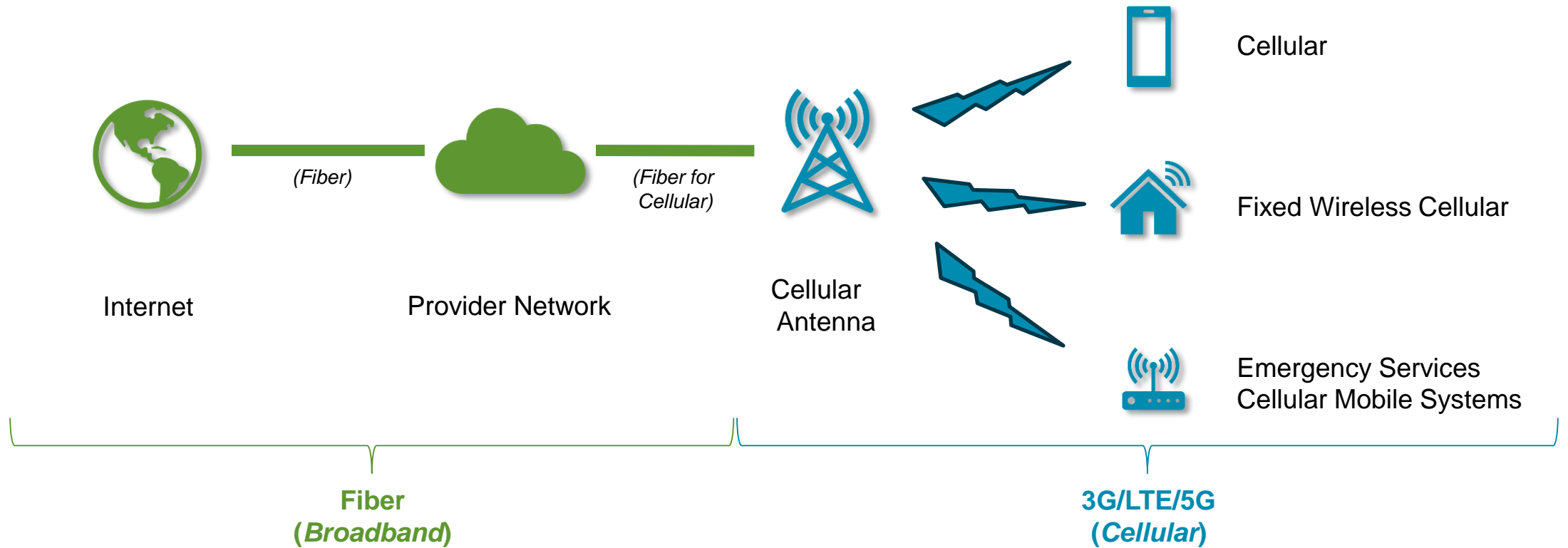
## Original Motion

- **THAT** Administration invite the primary internet and cellular service providers operating in Strathcona County to meet with Council or Priorities Committee, as soon as possible, to discuss solutions for the poor broadband and cellular service throughout the County, including both urban and rural areas; and
- **THAT** Administration prepare a report for Council's consideration by the end of October 2023 on near term options to improve broadband and cellular service throughout Strathcona County including funding opportunities, current state and future state infrastructure plans, identification of barriers that telecom carriers have identified and options for an advocacy and communications strategy.

## Discussions

- Administration met with providers:
  - Telus on September 13, 2023
  - Rogers on August 21, 2023
  - Bell on September 29, 2023

# Relationship Between Broadband and Cellular



# Tower Permit Applications By Provider

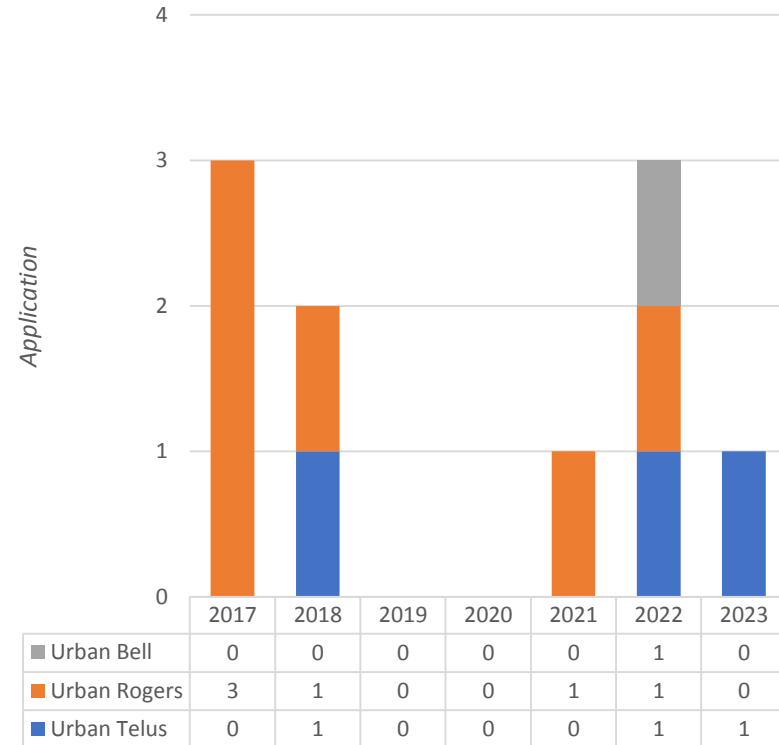
RURAL Tower Approved Applications



## Rural Total Towers

- Bell 0 towers
- Rogers 11 towers
- TELUS 22 towers

URBAN Tower Approved Applications



## Urban

- Bell 4 towers
- Rogers 9 towers
- TELUS 9 towers

# Provider Discussion Summary

## Challenges

- Some public concerns regarding perceived health risks with 5G
- Some public concerns regarding tower locations and proximity to residences
- Huawei equipment removal and network changes are causing challenges with coverage and capacity

## Opportunities

- Invitation extended to cellular providers to speak with Council at each meeting
- Municipal Access Agreements underway to simplify processes with providers
- Coordination with providers to ensure core infrastructure setup for new developments
- Review the land use bylaw (circa 2001) to simplify tower applications and rules

# Advocacy Strategy and Communications

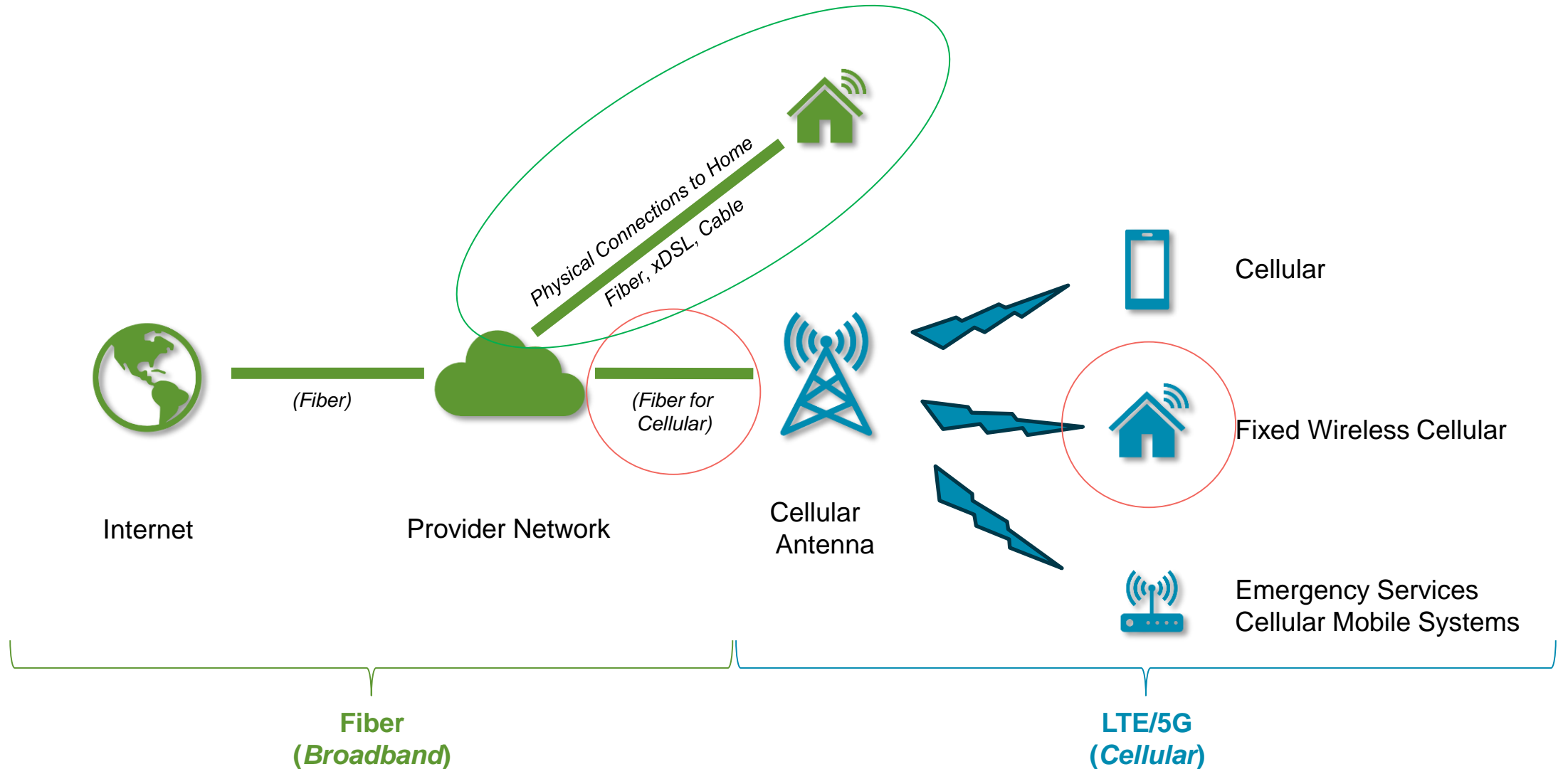
## Intergovernmental Affairs (IA)

- IA has prepared strategies on discussing cellular that will promote better services for the County
- A written document will be provided to Council to outlining the areas of responsibility for government and providers, along with key messages for each group, as well as for residents, businesses and stakeholders

## Corporate Communications

- Will provide key messages for Council's use with public, business, municipalities, and government agencies
- Coordination with providers on key projects and elevating awareness of services in the community as they become available
- Will add additional cellular specific content to <https://www.strathcona.ca/internet> to help residents find answers to common questions

# Broadband Impact on Cellular





# Funding Impacts

## Challenges

- UBF/ABF are leading investments to specific areas of the province, which may have downstream impacts. Capital is limited
- ABF rules around accessing these funds make it difficult for the County to put in applications due to our proximity to Edmonton and serviced areas within the County

## Opportunities

- The Government of Alberta (GoA) continues to put out intakes for the Alberta Broadband Fund (ABF) in conjunction with the federal Universal Broadband Fund (UBF)
- Strathcona County continues to seek opportunities with the GoA and providers to access these funds as they become available

## Q&A

Thank you!

