

## INFORMATION NOTE

### Advice to Minister Beare

**Date:** December 9, 2020

**CLIFF#:** 114262

**ISSUE:** Connected Coast Network project update

**BACKGROUND:**

The Connected Coast Network project involves the installation of sub-sea fibre-optic cable, stretching from north of Prince Rupert, to Haida Gwaii (Masset), south to Vancouver and around Vancouver Island.

The project has a goal of bringing landing sites to 159 coastal communities, including 51 Indigenous communities representing 44 First Nations, along BC coast from north of Prince Rupert, to Haida Gwaii, south to Vancouver, and around Vancouver Island. See ATT-1.

The Connected Coast Network does not include last-mile builds, but once the landing sites are complete, the new fibre backbone will enable increased last-mile internet speeds and reliability.

The project leads are CityWest Cable & Telephone Corporation (CityWest) and the Strathcona Regional District (Strathcona). They have partnered on the project to jointly build the network.

Total project investment is \$45.4 million, co-shared between the federal and provincial governments. The federal government is lead funder.

- \$22.2 million will come from the Connect to Innovate program, administered through Innovation, Science and Economic Development (Innovation Canada).
- \$12.0 million will come from Indigenous Services Canada.
- \$11.2 million will come from the Connecting British Columbia program administered by the Northern Development Initiative Trust (Northern Development).
- The total aggregate amounts as committed by the major funders for the CityWest and Strathcona projects is unchanged, apart from the added scope for connecting Tlowitsis First Nation. All Nations Trust Company's Pathways to Technology project and Innovation Canada will each contribute an estimated \$187,600 in new funding.

**DISCUSSION:**

CityWest and Strathcona have been granted a project completion date extension from March 31, 2021 to March 31, 2023. s.16

s.16

### **Federal government program received unprecedented applications**

s.16; s.17

The Connected Coast Network project was announced by the federal government on January 17, 2018. The federal government then entered into negotiations with the project leads, which successfully ended in federal contribution agreements being issued for proponents' signature in June 2019. Federal agreements were signed by CityWest on October 11, 2019 and Strathcona signed on October 29, 2019. During this time, Strathcona formed the Strathcona Connected Coast Network Corporation, which was incorporated on September 7, 2018, as a wholly owned subsidiary of the regional district. CityWest also established the City West Connected Coast Network Corp.

### **Resolution over shared fibre section of project**

During contract negotiations with Canada a shared ownership section of fibre between Port Hardy and Campbell River was moved to CityWest ownership. s.16; s.17

s.16; s.17

s.16; s.17

Northern Development's

agreements were signed and executed on January 20, 2020 with CityWest and February 21, 2020 with Strathcona.

### **Project procurement**

During the summer 2020, CityWest and Strathcona worked on a procurement for the installation of the subsea fibre. On June 21, 2020, a Request for Information (RFI) was posted on BC Bid, with a closing date of July 28, 2020. The RFI was then followed by a Request for Proposal (RFP) on August 14, 2020, with a closing date of September 1, 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic had caused some delays with the procurement. The RFI sought information from interested parties for the supply and construction of the subsea cable solution and the RFP sought to select a design and construction contractor for the network. The project leads will be issuing a press release shortly announcing the company selected for the subsea fibre installation. On October 9, 2020, Strathcona and CityWest announced that they are proceeding with a joint venture agreement ATT-2

Recipients under Canada's funding program (and co-funded under the Connecting British Columbia program) are required to *"use a fair and competitive or otherwise justifiable and generally accepted sound business process that results in competent and qualified contractors and/or personnel working on the project"*.

**Focus is on Network Design followed by Stakeholder Engagement**

During the federal due diligence process, some landing sites were removed from scope and land segments were added to reach communities not adjacent to the coast. Project leads will be validating the proposed landing sites through the engineering and environmental assessments and First Nations consultations. A high-level plan for the completion of the project, from announcement to construction is available here: <https://connectedcoast.ca/schedule/>.

The project leads have identified stakeholder engagement as an important aspect of the Connected Coast project. Project leads are currently working on an engagement plan and more details will follow.

The federal Universal Broadband Fund and to the Connecting British Columbia program are an opportunity to support new or upgrades for last-mile projects along the Connected Coast route.

**CONCLUSION:**

The Connected Coast Network when complete will achieve two priorities:

- Bring unprecedented digital capacity to rural and remote communities and position B.C. to better optimize its coastal advantage.
- Create a diverse and reliable path for connectivity to the north to mitigate loss of connectivity should service on the existing routes be interrupted by, for example, extreme weather, wildfire, flooding, slides).

s.16; s.17

s.16; s.17                      Now that the procurement phase is complete, the project leads are focused on permitting and stakeholder engagement.

A list of frequently asked questions on the Connected Coast is in ATT-3.





Attachment(s): ATT-1 Map  
ATT-2 SRD and CityWest press release  
ATT-3 Frequently Asked Questions

Contact: Susan Stanford, Assistant Deputy Minister, (778) 698-2349

CONNECTED  
COAST  
PROJECT



Legend

-  Landing Site
-  Indigenous Landing Site
-  CityWest  
Proposed Sub-Sea Cable
-  Strathcona Regional District  
Proposed Sub-Sea Cable

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# Connected Coast Network project

June 2020

## ***What is the project scope?***

The Connected Coast Network project involves the installation of sub-sea fibre-optic cable, stretching from north of Prince Rupert, to Haida Gwaii (Masset), south to Vancouver and around Vancouver Island.

The Connected Coast Network does not include last-mile builds, but once the landing sites are complete, the new fibre backbone will enable increased last-mile internet speeds and reliability.

## ***Who are the project leads?***

The project leads are CityWest Cable & Telephone Corporation (CityWest) and the Strathcona Regional District (Strathcona). They have partnered to own and operate the fibre-optic cable.

## ***How much funding has been allocated to the project and by whom?***

Total project investment is \$45.4 million, co-shared between the federal and provincial governments. The federal government is lead funder.

- \$22.2 million will come from the Connect to Innovate program, administered through Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED).
- \$12.0 million will come from Indigenous Services Canada.
- \$11.2 million will come from the Connecting British Columbia program administered by the Northern Development Initiative Trust (Northern Development).
- The total aggregate amounts as committed by the major funders for the CityWest and Strathcona projects is unchanged, apart from the added scope for connecting Tlowitsis First Nation. All Nations Trust Company's Pathways to Technology project and ISED will each contribute an estimated \$187,600 in new funding.

## ***How many communities will this project benefit?***

During the federal due diligence process, some landing sites were removed from scope and land segments were added to reach communities not adjacent to the coast. Project leads will be validating the landing sites through the engineering and environmental assessments and First Nations consultations. The new number of sites and communities anticipated to benefit from the project: 159 landing sites (revised from the original 154 landing sites). Forty-four Indigenous communities are anticipated to benefit.

***What is the status of the project?***

- Federal ISED Minister Bains provided final project approval to CityWest in May 2019 and to Strathcona Regional District in July 2019. Northern Development Initiative Trust agreements were signed in January and February 2020.
- Recently CityWest and Strathcona have formally requested an extension, from March 2021 to March 2023, to complete the project.
- The federal government views the Connected Coast Network as one project even though there are two recipients, each responsible for their portion of the project.

***When will the project be complete? Is there a delay?***

- Recently CityWest and Strathcona have formally requested an extension, from March 2021 to March 2023, to complete the project. Canada has granted this extension.
- The project leads determine the build schedule for the project, which could be impacted by a variety of factors including procurement, permitting, environmental assessments and First Nations consultations.

***What is the federal government's role?***

The federal government is lead funder. The department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development has allocated over \$22.2 million and the department of Indigenous Services Canada has allocated \$12 million.

***What is the provincial government's role?***

The provincial government granted funds to the Northern Development Initiative Trust to administer the Connecting British Columbia program. The Trust is responsible for funding a portion of the project.

***What is Northern Development Initiative Trust's role?***

The Trust administers the Connecting British Columbia program. In its role, they accept applications, conduct their own due diligence, approves projects, negotiates agreements with recipients, and monitors the progress of project.

***How much funding has been spent to date on the project?***

This enquiry should be referred to Northern Development Initiative Trust as the program administrator.

***Why is there a need for this project? What will it resolve?***

The Connected Coast Network when complete will achieve strategic priorities:

- Enable internet service companies to offer high-speed connectivity in future.
- Create a diverse and reliable path for connectivity to the north to mitigate loss of connectivity should service on the existing routes be interrupted by, for example, extreme weather, wildfire, flooding, slides)
- The Connected Coast Network project will bring unprecedented digital capacity to rural and remote communities and position B.C. to better optimize its coastal advantage.

<https://srd.ca/srd-citywest-proceed-with-joint-venture-agreement/>

October 9th, 2020

# **SRD & CityWest Proceed with Joint Venture Agreement**

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## INFORMATION NOTE

### Advice to Minister Beare

**Date:** December 10, 2020

**CLIFF#:** 114263

**ISSUE:** Connecting British Columbia program project intake update

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The Connecting British Columbia program is designed to position B.C. to leverage private sector investments and benefit from national funding opportunities. Eligible applicants, including internet service providers, can apply for provincial and federal funding to help bring high-speed internet services to underserved rural, remote and Indigenous communities in B.C.

The program is funded by the provincial government and administered by Northern Development Initiative Trust. Project applications are approved by Northern development's Grant Committee.

In December 2019, the provincial government announced Phase 3 (a \$50-million expansion) of the Connecting British Columbia program, with an intake for applications starting in December 2019. Approximately \$35 million remain to be disbursed and is available to leverage the federal Universal Broadband Fund.

In April 2020, as part of Phase 3 funding, a new "COVID-19 Response Intake" was launched to help support the COVID-19 response. \$1.2 million in grants were disbursed, with 47 projects completed, making a positive impact on rapid network upgrades that benefitted 9,300 households in various areas of the province.

On September 17, 2020, the provincial government announced a onetime investment of \$90 million to expand the Connecting British Columbia program. The Economic Recovery Intake was launched on October 1, 2020. This funding is part of StrongerBC, B.C.'s Economic Recovery Plan and will support connectivity projects that can be implemented by October 31, 2021 in rural and Indigenous communities and along B.C.'s highways.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

The Economic Recovery Intake will help accelerate connectivity infrastructure expansion by service providers. The projects are expected to improve connectivity in 200 rural communities, including Indigenous communities.

While many projects will bring internet speeds of 50/10 Mbps or above to communities, some projects may only deliver a minimum of 25/5 Mbps as an incremental step to achieving higher speeds.

Funding will also establish 140 kilometres of highway cellular, connectivity at up to 14 rest areas, which could include inland ferry terminals and approximately four emergency call boxes.

Eligible applicants include internet service providers, both for-profit and not-for profit, and other organizations based in B.C., that own and operate their own network and supply services to residents. The program funds up to 90% of eligible costs with remainder of costs expected to come from the applicant or other sources. The maximum grant request is \$10 million per project.

To date, the program has received applications requesting nearly \$140 million from the Economic Recovery Intake. Northern Development has started to make project funding approvals. The Economic Recovery Intake will continue accepting applications until the funds are fully allocated.

#### **Canada's Universal Broadband Fund (UBF)**

On Nov. 9, 2020, the federal government announced an investment of \$1.75 billion to help connect Canadians to high-speed Internet across the country. The program will include a \$150 million Rapid Response Stream with an accelerated application process that will allow shovel-ready projects to get started right away. The UBF will also allocate \$50 million of its total budget for mobile internet projects that primarily benefit Indigenous peoples.

Working with the provinces and territories, Canada's goal is to connect 98% of Canadians across the country to high-speed Internet by 2026, with the goal of connecting all Canadians by 2030, so that they can better participate in the digital economy.

s.16

#### **NEXT STEPS:**

As projects are approved and funding agreements are executed by Northern Development, GCPE will be notified so that project announcements can be made.

Contact: Susan Stanford, Assistant Deputy Minister, (778) 698-2349

## BRIEFING NOTE

### Premier's Office Enquiry

### Port Renfrew Connectivity

## Briefing Note

### What:

*Connecting British Columbia program connectivity along Highway 14 and communities between Shirley and Port Renfrew*

### Executive Summary:

Currently Jordan River and Port Renfrew do not have internet service that meets the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) standard of 50 megabits per second download to the home. Nor do these communities have cellular service.

The Connecting British Columbia program, funded by the Province and administered by Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT), has received two applications, one from Rogers and another TELUS for potential solutions to improve connectivity in the area. In addition, the Connected Coast project will have landing sites at both communities that can support connectivity projects to provide for both internet to the home and cellular services.

**High-speed Internet (Broadband) Connectivity** – Slow internet speed in Port Renfrew is primarily the result of transport capacity—or the total capacity reaching communities. Currently, transport capacity is brought in by microwave (a wireless technology) from Sooke and is not meeting the current demand. There are aging last-mile cable systems in these communities, including the Pacheedaht First Nation, which are owned by TELUS.

## BRIEFING NOTE

### Premier's Office Enquiry

### Port Renfrew Connectivity

**Cellular Connectivity** – There is currently no cellular service from Shirley to Port Renfrew. A project proposal submitted by Rogers, if approved, could complete cellular along this route by October 2021.

#### Background:

**TELUS Application:** As part of the federal CRTC fund intake in June 2020, TELUS submitted a project application that proposes the installation of new fibre along Highway 14 from Sooke to Port Renfrew, increasing available internet capacity to communities en route. While TELUS's project proposal was submitted to both the Connecting British Columbia program and the CRTC fund in June, a significant portion of the funding is expected to come from the CRTC. The project includes two parts: 1) Last-mile, or in-community internet and 2) fibre along Highway 14.

The last-mile component of the project for Port Renfrew and Jordan River was accepted by the Connecting British Columbia program in June as it was not in conflict with the Connected Coast project. Northern Development has issued a conditional approval letter for over \$600,000 for the last-mile portion. NDIT has requested an update from TELUS on the status of their CRTC application. TELUS has not advised if the last-mile component could be considered separately from the fibre along the highway. TELUS originally advised the build would be completed by 2023, however if the last-mile component is considered as a separate project from their CRTC application, there is a possibility it could be done sooner.

The fibre portion along Highway 14, was deemed to be redundant with the Connected Coast project and therefore wasn't fundable by NDIT.

## BRIEFING NOTE

### Premier's Office Enquiry

### Port Renfrew Connectivity

The Strathcona Regional District, co-owner of the Connected Coast project with CityWest, is seeking last mile providers in communities on the Connected Coast route to use their network when available.<sup>s.17</sup>

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Communications on the project

status can be shared once all funder decisions have been made.

**Rogers Application:** Recently, Rogers applied to the \$90 million Connecting British Columbia program Economic Recovery Intake administered by Northern Development to expand cellular connectivity along Highway 14 and to communities between Sooke and Port Renfrew. The project has been notionally approved by Trust's grant committee, subject some further engineering due diligence. Rogers is currently conducting the required due diligence and once that has been completed the project can be approved and publicly communicated. It is expected the due diligence will be completed by January 2021. The total project value is nearly \$6 million with Northern Development contributing nearly \$5 million. See ATT-2 for a map of the proposed coverage along the route. The project will use existing capacity from Sooke and will take advantage of the Connected Coast project when available. Projects funded by the Economic Recovery Intake must be completed by October 31, 2021.

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## **BRIEFING NOTE**

### **Premier's Office Enquiry**

### **Port Renfrew Connectivity**

#### **Recommendations:**

As the program administrator, Northern Development has responded directly to Rogers and TELUS regarding their applications and addresses any questions the applicants might have in the context of their funding application to the Connecting British Columbia program.

Applications include business confidential information and cannot be shared across proponents. In addition, the large number of proposals and level of due diligence required, often funded projects are different than original proposals. Communications regarding approved projects are by practice made by the province when funding decisions are finalized.

Attachments:      1) TELUS proposed coverage map  
                         2) Rogers Communications Inc.'s proposed coverage map

## INFORMATION NOTE

### Advice to Minister Beare

**Date:** December 15, 2020

**CLIFF#:** 114199

**ISSUE:** CityWest funding applications received by Northern Development Initiative Trust

**BACKGROUND:**

The purpose of this briefing note is to provide an update on efforts to connect coastal communities, how this relates to the Connected Coast Network project, and to address concerns raised by the North Island MLA, Michele Babchuk, related to recent applications submitted by CityWest.

Northern Development Initiative Trust (Trust) is the program administrator for the provincially funded Connecting British Columbia program. In its role, the Trust conducts due diligence and approves projects for funding. Network BC (Ministry of Citizens' Services) provides a technical review of project applications.

Recently, CityWest submitted an initial set of six applications to the \$90 million Connecting British Columbia Economic Recovery Intake. All projects funded by the Economic Recovery Intake must be completed by October 31, 2021, a condition set by the Province. The Trust has provided feedback to CityWest to remediate and resubmit their applications to the appropriate funding program.

- Five applications targeting Bella Coola, Cortes Island, Gold River, Sayward, and Quadra Island are for connectivity to the home, with an intention to utilize the Connected Coast Network project when completed to supply the proposed projects with the required bandwidth. The Trust has suggested that these applications are more likely to be successful and are better suited for co-funding by the federal Universal Broadband Fund and the Connecting British Columbia program Phase 3. Currently these proposals do not meet the criteria of the Economic Recovery Intake.
- One application is for Burns Lake. The Trust has asked CityWest to remove the core area of Burns Lake from their application as it is already served by 50/10 Mbps by TELUS' subsidiary Mascon Communications. NDIT will ask CityWest to remediate and resubmit their application to improve coverage focusing in on areas of need. This application does not have a dependency on the Connected Coast project.



**DISCUSSION:**

In June 2019, the Strathcona Regional District led a series of seven Connected Coast Network community engagement sessions, promoting the importance and value of regional and community-led planning. These sessions took place at Cortes Island, Gold River, Kyuquot, Quadra Island, Sayward, Tahsis, and Zeballos<sup>1</sup>. From the sessions, the Strathcona Regional District produced community broadband plans and options for improving local connectivity.<sup>2</sup>

Northern Development's Grant Committee had both technical and business concerns with the applications for last mile projects from CityWest. NDIT discussed these concerns directly with the CEO of CityWest by phone.

NDIT's Grant Committee decided that the proposed projects that had a dependency on the Connected Coast were best suited for joint funding through the federal Universal Broadband Fund and the Connecting British Columbia program. This would provide CityWest with additional time to reconsider their network design and technology and align proposed project completion with the Connected Coast Network timelines. Also, it would provide more time to reconcile the proposed projects with the results of the community broadband plans. Projects would not have to be completed by October 31, 2021. The application deadline for the Universal Broadband Fund is February 15, 2021.

As a point of clarification, the bundle of six applications submitted to the Trust were not denied. The Trust has asked CityWest to remediate and resubmit the applications for consideration under the appropriate funding program.

A series of questions and answers have been prepared for the MLA for the North Island to provide additional clarity and address the concerns raised in her correspondence to the Minister of Citizens' Services. Please see ATT-1.

**NEXT STEPS:**

Meet with the MLA for the North Island to provide clarity and answer any questions that may arise related to federal and provincial funding opportunities for local builds.

The Province is looking forward to hearing from the project leads on progress related to the Connected Coast Network fibre build.

**ATTACHMENT:** ATT-1 Questions and Answers for MLA North Island

Contact: Susan Stanford, Assistant Deputy Minister, (778) 698-2349

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<sup>1</sup> June 1, 2019 SRD Broadband Community Planning Presentations & Workshops: <https://connectedcoast.ca/srd-broadband-community-planning-presentations-workshops/>

<sup>2</sup> Strathcona Regional District Community Broadband Plans: <https://connectedcoast.ca/srd-community-broadband-plans/>.

## Questions and Answers for MLA North Island

	Issue / Question	Response / Answer
1	<i>Have all of the CityWest granting opportunities for last-mile projects through NDIT been denied?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are currently multiple funding opportunities for connectivity projects</li> <li>• CityWest submitted 5 applications to the Connecting British Columbia Emergency Recovery Intake (\$90M) for last mile infrastructure for 19 communities</li> <li>• Some communities in CityWest's applications do not require last-mile infrastructure and therefore would not be eligible for funding.</li> <li>• CityWest's applications for qualifying communities were unable to meet the criteria for the Economic Recovery Intake and were therefore referred to other funding streams where criteria could be met by their applications with some modification.</li> <li>• NDIT provided feedback to CityWest on their applications. CityWest did not express any concern with the feedback and continues to work with NDIT on submitting their applications to the federal Universal Broadband Fund for eligible communities. CITZ continues to offer technical support.</li> </ul>
2	<i>Would these projects be given a priority?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Connecting British Columbia Economic Recovery Intake (\$90M) was specifically designed to expedite connectivity through last mile projects where transport was available or imminent. The goal of the intake, as part of StrongerBC is to improve connectivity in communities as quickly as possible, being one build summer build season in 2021 with all projects to be completed by October 31, 2021.</li> <li>• Projects submitted to the intake need to realize benefits to the community in this timeframe as part of the established funding criteria.</li> <li>• Given the 'rapid' pace and intent of the Connecting British Columbia Economic Recovery Intake (\$90M), last-mile projects, especially those that leverage provincially funded transport projects that will be completed by October 2021 are a priority.</li> <li>• Projects that require a longer timeline to build, or for when communities will benefit would be referred to other funding streams where the criteria for qualifying was better aligned.</li> <li>• NDIT provided detailed information to CityWest regarding the deficiencies with their 5 applications. NDIT is continuing to support CityWest remediate their applications in time to be submitted to the federal Universal Broadband Fund Rapid Response (\$1.75B) which closes February 15, 2021.</li> </ul>

## Questions and Answers for MLA North Island

4	<i>What are the next steps for those last-mile projects with a dependency on the Connected Coast project?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As CityWest's applications did not meet the Connecting British Columbia Economic Recovery Intake (\$90M) criteria, the Universal Broadband Fund (\$1.75B) provides an opportunity for the applications to be remediated and to align with funding criteria.</li> <li>The Universal Broadband Fund was not the reason for the applications to be denied rather an opportunity for them to be successful.</li> </ul>
5	<i>What are the criteria for the various funding programs in the context of CityWest's applications?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CityWest is familiar with both the federal and provincial application process—they have been successful grant recipients for multiple projects.</li> <li>NDIT has aligned their application process with the Universal Broadband Fund to simplify the process for proponents that require co-funding.</li> <li>Applications for joint funding use the federal application form with a supplementary form submitted to NDIT for provincial funding.</li> <li>Different from previous intakes, the federal government and NDIT evaluate applications jointly – this will dramatically expedite the process over previous intakes.</li> <li>This intake process has been communicated to applicants, including Strathcona Regional District / CityWest (SRD/CW) in a webinar hosted by NDIT.</li> </ul>
6	<i>Federal funding ratios - a 75-25 split</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To meet the criteria of any funding program, a project must be able to deliver a service by a specified time.</li> <li>CityWest's applications to the Connecting British Columbia Economic Recovery Intake (\$90M) could not demonstrate they could meet the intake criteria, including delivering improved service by October 2021.</li> <li>The regular Connecting British Columbia program intake (Phase3 \$50M) and the Universal Broadband Fund (\$1.75B) has criteria more suited to the CityWest projects</li> <li>By referring CityWest to the Universal Broadband Fund (\$1.75B) and Connecting British Columbia program intake (Phase 3 \$50M), the projects, once remediated to include only eligible communities, would have time to be completed and aligned to the Connected Coast Network build plan so that communities benefit from the full potential of the last-mile builds.</li> </ul>
7	<i>Assumption that connectivity is not going to be a priority for the federal government until after the Rapid Response Intake is over</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Different funding programs have different thresholds for the proportion of eligible expenses they will fund.</li> </ul>

## Questions and Answers for MLA North Island

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funds also allow for cost sharing, or “stacking” of funds across programs to single projects when a project is submitted to multiple programs such as the streamlined dual intake between NDIT and the federal Universal Broadband Fund (\$1.75B)</li> <li>The concern raised was that the Connecting British Columbia Economic Recovery Intake (\$90M) allowed for up to 90% of eligible costs to be funded through the program, and concern that not being able to access this fund may limited the proportion CityWest may receive for their eligible expenses for their projects. This is not accurate.</li> <li>The regular Connecting British Columbia program (Phase 3 \$50M) and the Universal Broadband Fund (\$1.75B) also allow up to 90% of eligible costs to be funded when the programs are ‘stacked’ for applications</li> <li>The Universal Broadband Fund (\$1.75B) will fund up to 75% of eligible project costs. If a project is co-funded by provincial and federal government programs, “stacking” is allowed up to 90%.</li> <li>Stacking rules have been communicated to applicants by ISED and by webinar hosted by NDIT. Both SRD and CityWest were in attendance. In addition, this information is available directly from NDIT and federal government’s web sites</li> </ul>
8	<i>Assumptions that applications will not pass through any approval processes until approximately 2022.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the recent webinar hosted by NDIT where Strathcona Regional District and CityWest attended, the federal program leads presented the Universal Broadband Fund to BC-based applicants</li> <li>The Universal Broadband Fund includes a Rapid Response Stream for \$150M of the total fund amount of \$1.75B. The federal government is intending to process all Rapid Response applications by February 2021 as applications will be evaluated as they are received—a fundamental shift from the stockpiling of submissions approach of their previous program.</li> <li>The near doubling of the federal fund from \$1B originally announced to the now \$1.75B over the same time horizon, and the new federal target of 98% of all Canadians to have access to the CRTC standard by 2026 indicates a more rapid approval and funding process than previous programs</li> </ul>
9	<i>This takes the Connected Coast project and puts it back two years.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The federal government has agreed to work jointly with NDIT on the evaluation and approval process for BC-based applications</li> <li>The federal government program team have confirmed, the proposal evaluation and approval process are being dramatically accelerated from previous years and project approvals are</li> </ul>

## Questions and Answers for MLA North Island

		<p>expected to be completed within a matter of months from submission—where previously they were years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>NB: The last federal government program was called Connect to Innovate. That \$500M program intake seriously underestimated project demand. The program received more than 900 project applications requesting more than \$2B in funding. The federal program team was completely overwhelmed, and it did take substantive time to approve projects as a complete evaluation of the entire intake was required prior to any decisions being made. The current program will not have the same approach seeking to move to approving projects that meet the criteria as quickly as possible.</i></li> </ul>
10	<i>Communities will start to get lit as soon as the last mile issues are taken care of</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The concern is that a delay in approving last mile projects, specifically CityWest's 5 applications, will delay benefits of the Connected Coast Network to the 19 coastal communities included in the applications</li> <li>• As mentioned earlier, the 5 CityWest applications could not meet the Connecting British Columbia Economic Recovery Intake (\$90M) program criteria and have been referred to alternate funding streams where the criteria are more likely to be met</li> <li>• However, CityWest will still need to remediate their applications to only eligible communities. For example, one of the applications from CityWest included Sayward. While this community is currently underserved, it already has last-mile infrastructure in place. This means as soon as the Connected Coast Network is available to the community, the community could instantly be upgraded without additional investment for last mile required.</li> <li>• In order to meet the goals of the Connecting British Columbia Economic Recovery Intake (\$90M) and the regular Connecting British Columbia program (Phase 3 \$50M), it is critical that funds go to where infrastructure is required and ensure that public funds are not used to overbuild or duplicate infrastructure already in place.</li> </ul>
11	<i>"It is also important to note that this this granting opportunity (the 90 million ERI) was nowhere close to being fully subscribed"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An estimated 115 communities along Connected Coast Network route have some form of last-mile infrastructure that could benefit from the high bandwidth of the project when it's available. These communities are already "lit" with various speeds delivered to the home.</li> <li>• The province, through the Connected Communities team at CITZ works in partnership with UBCM, Regional Districts, Rural Economic Operations (FLNRORD) and others to support communities develop their digital plans and engage and support Service Providers applying to the Connecting British Columbia program (all intakes). For example, Connected Communities</li> </ul>

## Questions and Answers for MLA North Island

		<p>led a Southern Gulf Islands engagement, funded by the Capital Regional District (CRD) to develop a connectivity plan for the islands. With some remediation, CityWest's applications that includes some of these communities will reflect this plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Of the 19 communities included in CityWest's 5 applications, almost all have existing last-mile infrastructure. In order not to use public funds to overbuild, part of the request to CityWest to remediate their applications includes leveraging existing infrastructure, including their own Connected Coast Network project. (For example, one of CityWest's applications included millions in additional infrastructure that would have negated the need for their Connected Coast Network landing sites.)</li> </ul>
12	<i>"Which is similar to the 50 million dollar connecting BC granting opportunity."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In order to meet the timelines of the Connecting British Columbia Economic Recovery Intake (\$90M) it is anticipated that funds will be fully allocated by February 2021. NDIT is assessing applications as they are received and making funding decisions on a monthly basis. October applications were evaluated by November 15<sup>th</sup>, and decisions shortly after. This cycle will be completed monthly until funds are fully allocated.</li> <li>The \$90M is allocated as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$75M for improved connectivity to 200 communities. (avg.\$ 375k/community).</li> <li>\$15M for 140Km of new highway connectivity (cellular) including connectivity to 14 Rest Areas and 4 call boxes.</li> <li>The 5 CityWest applications were for 19 communities for \$24M in funding. (\$1.26M/community)</li> </ul> </li> <li>The intake opened on October 1, 2020 and as of November 30, 2020, received 29 applications in October for over \$80 million of which nearly \$36 million was conditionally approved.</li> <li>27 applications were received in November for over \$57 million and are currently being evaluated.</li> </ul>
13	<i>"I also have concerns around a completion date imposed by NDIT, which is by the end of October 2021 for the last mile projects to be connected to the backbone fiber."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The regular Connecting British Columbia program (Phase 3 \$50M) was launched in parallel with the new CRTC fund (\$750M)</li> <li>The criteria of the CRTC fund deterred many service providers from applying and as a result fewer applications were received than expected.</li> <li>The regular Connecting British Columbia program (Phase 3 \$50M) continues to accept applications and had a streamlined joint intake with the federal Universal Broadband Fund (\$1.75B)</li> </ul>

## Questions and Answers for MLA North Island

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The federal government had originally indicated that they would open the intake for the Universal Broadband Fund in Spring 2020 but delayed until November 2020. As federal programs require matching funds, Service Providers have waited for the federal program to open. The regular Connecting British Columbia program is anticipated to be fully allocated in early 2020 due to accelerated Universal Broadband Fund (\$1.75B) submissions and the intake closing date of February 15, 2020</li> <li>There is approximately \$35M remaining from the regular Connecting British Columbia program Phase 3 \$50M.</li> </ul>
14	<i>"The idea of applying for the UBF will put this project about 2 -3 years behind and will remove any of the good work and great successes that this government has the ability to promote over the next 12 month to 24 months and encumbers the local government leaders to get this project running and be able to deliver on their business case."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The October 31, 2021 project completion date was specified by the Province in support of StrongerBC: Economic Recovery Plan as the target for the funds granted to NDIT for the Connecting British Columbia Economic Recovery Intake. As the program administrator, NDIT is advising the applicants of the program criteria which is determined by the Province.</li> <li>Any projects that require additional time to realize community benefits is referred to the Universal Broadband Fund – Connecting British Columbia joint intake process</li> </ul>
15	<i>"Hence, it is my understanding that this risk has already been addressed and resolved."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Connected Coast Network project business case was built and funded as a federal Connect to Innovate program transport project. Last mile infrastructure both existing and new will be able to benefit from the improved bandwidth it will deliver.</li> <li>Connections to the Connected Coast Network will provide revenue for the project.</li> <li>Announcement opportunities are not reliant on new funded last-mile projects, particularly when existing last mile projects are underutilized and can deliver 50/10 Mbps when supported by the Connected Coast Network.</li> <li>Of the 159 landing sites, 115 communities currently have last mile infrastructure, such as Sayward, that may benefit from the Connected Coast when complete.</li> </ul>
16	<i>"truly believe there is a way to get this project off the ground, still access the Federal Universal"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permitting requirements for the Connected Coast Network project may still be an issue as the project approaches its first build season this spring.</li> </ul>

## Questions and Answers for MLA North Island

	<i>Broadband Fund so we can service the communities of the West Coast of British Columbia.”</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strathcona Regional District and CityWest have yet to submit permit requests for the Connected Coast Network project</li><li>• To support the Connecting British Columbia Economic Recovery Intake (\$90M), and the Connected Coast Network project, CITZ has established a cross-ministry permitting navigation team to expedite the permitting process as possible for these specific projects. However, the ability to effectively support the Connected Coast Network project is dependent on the permitting applications, which is currently unknown.</li></ul>
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## INFORMATION NOTE

### Advice to Minister Beare

**Date:** December 16, 2020

**CLIFF#:** 114303

**ISSUE:** Community Connectivity Communications & Engagements

#### **BACKGROUND:**

In 2018, the Ministry created a program area called Connected Communities with the specific purpose to support rural, remote and Indigenous communities plan for and navigate funding, programs, technologies and Service Providers needed to increase internet speeds to their residents, visitors and businesses.

In addition to overseeing connectivity funding programs and regulation, the Network BC Branch provides ongoing technical advice and expertise to Local Governments and other stakeholders that promote connectivity to rural, remote and Indigenous communities province wide.

Since its creation, the types of community engagements and supports have diversified. An overview of Connected Communities tools is available on the [Connectivity in BC](#) web page. Examples of engagements include the following:

#### **Proactive work with regional districts, local governments and Indigenous communities to support connectivity planning and uptake of available capacity supports and tools.**

- Provide ongoing support to regional district led connectivity collaboration - *Regional Connectivity Knowledge Network (RCKN)* to enable capacity building through peer-to-peer knowledge-sharing, training, mentoring, relationship building and collaboration, with an emphasis on inclusive relationships with Indigenous connectivity leads.
- Established a CITZ/FLNRORD MoU with the Rural Development Unit (RDU) to ensure connectivity is integrated into rural development planning and programs, and support the RDU with connectivity expertise and community transition response requirements such as mill curtailments.
- Support Indigenous organizations such as, Coastal First Nations, Carrier Sekani Tribal Council, First Nations Technology Council, and the BC Assembly of First Nations, in identifying digital priorities and accessing key resources/planning supports.
- Support Southern Gulf Island engagements (Mayne, Pender, Saturna, Galiano) with the Capital Regional District (CRD) to develop connectivity plans to attract investment and access funding.
  - **Key Result** - [Phase 1 of CRD's report](#), a comprehensive community-led report, was published January 2020. CRD is now working on Phase 2, which is infrastructure-based and funding focused.
- Provide ongoing support for Connected Coast Network community engagements promoting the importance and value of regional and community-led connectivity planning (Kyuquot, Quadra Island, Zeballos, Sayward, Cortes Island, Tahsis, Gold River). Engagement is ongoing.

- Continue to provide input to Strathcona Regional District (SRD) and CityWest community engagement plans and work with communities on regional priorities.
  - While SRD and CityWest focus on implementing the Connected Coast Network project, Connected Communities focuses on assisting communities with their last-mile planning, to ensure communities are positioned to access and benefit from funding.

#### **Connected Coast Network Engagement Support:**

The Connected Coast Joint Venture Partnership (“CCP”) is a partnership between CityWest & Strathcona Regional District with a mandate to deliver the Connected Coast Network Project.

- CCP is releasing a Communications Strategy and Plan for Communities (see Appendix 2), along with a video, to update and engage communities. The Strategy highlights the CCP has met with 8 regional districts to promote and advance last mile interests. It states a community engagement model has been developed to support the process of expediting permitting approvals.
- UBCM has confirmed they are going to distribute the Connected Coast Communications Strategy and supporting video in their upcoming Compass Newsletter.

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#### **Strategic Engagement with Coastal First Nations for Connectivity**

- Coastal First Nations (CFN) is a unique alliance of nine Nations living on British Columbia’s North and Central Coast and Haida Gwaii. Each Nation has its own distinct culture, governance and territory.
- Connected Communities program has been working with CFN to support its member communities’ digital readiness and capacity through comprehensive connectivity planning to support Last Mile priorities and solutions in preparation for the Connected Coast Network.
- As part of CFN’s updated Reconciliation Protocol Agreement with the Province, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been developed between CFN and CITZ, which includes a Connectivity Schedule.
  - Terms of Reference and Workplan has been endorsed by CFN leadership to optimize the wellbeing benefits of the Connected Coast Network project.
  - Work directly with CFN member Nations to advance digital priorities through 7 Generations Partnership Gathering initiative.

#### **ACTIONS and NEXT STEPS:**

- Work with FLNRORD to update the collaborative MoU between CITZ/Connectivity and FLNRORD/Rural Development Unit to reflect respective connectivity mandates.
- Provide a status update on the joint work on connectivity per the MOU with the Coastal First Nations.

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- Continue to participate in negotiations with Carrier Sekani and Takla First Nations for the inclusion of connectivity in agreements in progress.
- Continue to work with UBCM to include connectivity updates into their communications.
- Follow up with the Capital Regional District and the Southern Gulf Islands on the status of their phase 2 connectivity plan.
- Monitor and report back on the progress of CityWest and Strathcona Regional Districts communication plan to communities expected to benefit from the Connected Coast Network.
- Seek additional opportunities to include connectivity into existing communications that support local governments leverage the provincial investments into expanding connectivity throughout the province.

Attachments:

Appendix 1: Connectivity Engagement and Communications

Appendix 2: CityWest's Communications Strategy & Community Plan to keep communities informed of progress to date.

Appendix 3: Connected Communities Engagements – by Region w Funding

Contact: Colleen McCormick, Connected Communities Lead 250-217-5337  
Susan Stanford, ADM 250-580-7459

## Appendix 1: Connectivity Engagement & Communications

### Community Communications and Capacity Supports

Connected Communities continues to develop educational supports, including videos showcasing connectivity use-cases that are strengthening connectivity plans:

- Village of Kaslo – [Kaslo InfoNet Society](#) – Highlights community-led innovative fibre solutions, coupled with a learning package ([news story](#), detailed technical guide) to supplement the video (September 2020)
- [Village of Cumberland](#) - Enhanced digital services help preserve and enhance the qualities that are earning this island community global recognition (Summer 2019)
- [Heiltsuk First Nation](#) - Revitalizing Language, Culture, and Place through Connectivity (Spring 2019)
- [Haida Nation & Coastal First Nations](#) – Unleashing the potential of a digitally-enabled Coast (Summer 2018)
- Developed [Self-Assessment Tool](#) as an educational engagement support for local governments, regional districts, and First Nations, outlining Success Factors and helping to identify connectivity gaps. (Oct 2019)
- Developed *Connectivity Fundamentals* manual as an educational engagement support for rural and Indigenous communities, summarizing the key steps to follow when entering a connectivity planning process. (July 2019)

### Connectivity Panels as an Educational/Strategic Engagement Approach

- Panel discussion strategy to support connectivity being featured at three consecutive UBCM Conventions (2018, 2019 and virtually in 2020)
- 2019 Convention panel Enhancing Resiliency through Connectivity featured three community showcases (Village of Cumberland, Coastal First Nations, Canal Flats) as an opportunity to increase local government awareness of how connectivity can be used as an investment catalyst and well being enabler.
- 2019 CITZ sponsored the UBCM Hydration Lounge to present the Community Information tool (data integration) and profile community and regional connectivity.
- 2020 panel Digitally-enabled, Remote & Ready featured a virtual panel showcasing an international vision for transforming rural economies via digital (ReGen Villages), the federal regulatory perspective (Canadian Federation of Municipalities), a community-driven service delivery model (Village of Kaslo Internet Society) and featuring a regional district call for collaboration (Cariboo Regional District).
- Other panels include Vancouver Island Economic Conferences, UBCM Area Association Meetings, and BC Tech Conferences.

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# Communications Strategy & Plan for Communities











# Connectivity & Connected Communities

(Last Updated: November 20, 2020)

## CONNECTED COMMUNITIES ENGAGEMENTS & CONNECTING BRITISH COLUMBIA PROGRAM FUNDING – BY REGION

### Overview:

- Network BC facilitates the expansion of connectivity (high-speed internet and cellular services) throughout BC. The Branch provides leadership and support by working directly with governments at all levels (federal, provincial, Indigenous, local) and the private sector (large telecommunications companies and small internet service providers), to align strategies and actions that assist service providers with digital infrastructure investments; to help expand their telecom networks and allow rural, remote and Indigenous communities to fully participate in the digital economy.
- Connected Communities, working with Network BC and Rural Development brings together local governments, Indigenous communities, cross-sector partners and community development leaders to accelerate digital readiness using connectivity as a catalyst for diversifying and building resilient economies, attracting regional investment and talent and enhancing quality of life throughout rural BC.

### Network BC Key Responsibilities:

- Lead provincial connectivity program development, industry and community support and monitors performance.
  - Manages the Connecting British Columbia program in cooperation with the program administrator Northern Development Initiative Trust.
  - Between 2015 and 2019, the Province granted \$100 million in connectivity funding to Northern Development Initiative Trust to administer the Connecting British Columbia program. In September 2020 an additional \$90 million was granted to expand the program under the StrongerBC Economic Recovery program funding.
  - Since July 2017, projects supported through the Province's Connecting British Columbia program are underway or completed in over 500 rural and remote communities, including 87 Indigenous communities.
  - Coordinates with federal funding programs such as the federal Universal Broadband Fund to expand connectivity and capture federal funding for BC-based projects
  - Tracks the progress of connectivity across 1,242 urban, rural and indigenous communities throughout the province.
  - Participates in the development of the national Connectivity Strategy through a Federal Provincial Territorial planning able.
  - Monitors federal government spectrum auctions, telecommunications policy and technology innovations impacting internet access including 5G and low earth orbit satellites.
- Act as the voice of the province on federal telecommunications regulatory issues including proceedings issued by the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).
  - Supports other ministries with CRTC interventions including internet affordability (SDPR), cellular bill transparency (PSSG) and attachment fees to hydro poles (EMPR/JEDC).
  - Responds directly to CRTC proceedings in support of the provincial priorities.
- Expand connectivity mapping and analysis capacity to include highways and other priority locales.

# Connectivity & Connected Communities

(Last Updated: November 20, 2020)

## Connected Communities Key Responsibilities:

- Proactively work with regional districts, municipalities and Indigenous communities on connectivity planning, including:
  - BC Coastal First Nations (CFN) MoU & Joint Connectivity Planning
    - Work directly with CFN to advance digital readiness and capacity through connectivity planning in preparation of the Connected Coast project.
    - Support indigenous communities in identifying digital priorities and connect community leaders to resources and planning supports.
  - Support advancing local government and regional district digital planning through the uptake of the Connecting Communities planning tools.
    - Connected Communities is supporting a province-wide regional district led connectivity collaboration hub with municipal, Indigenous and regional leaders to identify barriers, seek collective solutions and work towards integrated planning and co-investments in digital infrastructure (UBCM/FCM Connectivity Priorities & Resolutions).

## Engagements and Associated Provincial Connectivity Investment

### List of all Connected Communities Engagements (2019/20)

Community/Organization	Engagement	Activities	Value/Impact	Investment
<b>Province-wide</b>  <b>Regional Connectivity Knowledge Network (RCKN)</b>	<p>Helped to facilitate and shape a regional district-led connectivity capacity building table to increase connectivity understanding, planning capacity and enable collaboration.</p> <p>Participants as of Nov, 2020:            Cariboo RD, RDBN, RDKS (representing Columbia Basin), CRD, SLRD, TNRD, RDFFG, RDEK, UBCM and Coastal First Nations (representing alliance of 9 nations)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitated development of terms of reference to focus on building connectivity planning capacity through peer-to-peer learning, sharing and mentoring.</li> <li>• Co-developed a group of expert advisors to support and guide participants as they develop connectivity leadership capacity (FCM, CIRA)</li> <li>• Identified training needs and facilitating subject matter experts to provide training.</li> <li>• Training rollout commenced Nov 16<sup>th</sup>; next session December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020.</li> </ul>	<p>Participation includes local government connectivity planning leads and their Indigenous counterparts, creating a peer-to-peer forum to enable and encourage regional, integrated connectivity planning as a strategic catalyst for economic and community development.</p>	<p>Connected Communities-UBCM informal secretariat support.</p>

# Connectivity & Connected Communities

(Last Updated: November 20, 2020)

## Coast Region:

**Connectivity Investments \$3.8M** (Haida Gwaii, Connected Coast, Great Bear Initiative Society, Digby Island/Dodge Cove)

## Connected Communities Engagements

Community/Organization	Engagement	Activities	Value/Impact	Investment								
Coastal First Nations	Supporting the Nations to plan for last-mile service delivery, to leverage the pending Connected Coast sub-sea fiber initiative through partnership-based digital capacity development initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Co-organized and led the successful Inaugural 7 Generations Partnerships Gathering with Coastal First Nations in Haida Gwaii in October 2019.</li><li>Facilitated Coastal First Nations participation in district-led province-wide, connectivity capacity building and collaboration.</li></ul>	<p>Connectivity has now been identified as a strategic priority in the MoU and Reconciliation Protocol Agreement between Coastal First Nations (CFN) and the Province</p> <p>Builds capacity to attract federal and provincial connectivity funding; Demonstrates active commitment to Reconciliation.</p>	<p><b>Investments in Region: \$3.8M</b></p> <p><b>Connectivity Projects:</b></p> <table><tr><td>Haida Gwaii FTTH</td><td>\$400,000</td></tr><tr><td>Connected Coast</td><td>\$3,161,701</td></tr><tr><td>Digby Island/ Dodge Cove</td><td>\$251,541</td></tr></table> <p><b>Other:</b></p> <table><tr><td>Great Bear Initiative Society (feasibility study)</td><td>\$15,000</td></tr></table>	Haida Gwaii FTTH	\$400,000	Connected Coast	\$3,161,701	Digby Island/ Dodge Cove	\$251,541	Great Bear Initiative Society (feasibility study)	\$15,000
Haida Gwaii FTTH	\$400,000											
Connected Coast	\$3,161,701											
Digby Island/ Dodge Cove	\$251,541											
Great Bear Initiative Society (feasibility study)	\$15,000											
Bella Coola Valley	Supporting local nonprofit ISP to problem-solve local barriers and to share their unique model to address digital literacy gaps in ways that support and reinforce service delivery and community education, training and economic interests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Facilitating relationships within and beyond the region.</li><li>Seeking opportunities to share their model with other communities.</li></ul>	Unique model demonstrates a made-in-BC solutions to rural connectivity barriers and community capacity building which may be replicable in other remote unserved and underserved communities.									

## Northern Region:

# Connectivity & Connected Communities

(Last Updated: November 20, 2020)

**Connectivity Investments \$2.3M** (Boar Mountain, Vanderhoof to Fort St. James, Houston, Willowdale and various other locales with RDBN boundary)

## Connected Community Engagements

Community/Organization	Engagement	Activities	Value/Impact	Investment
<b>Bulkley Nechako Regional District</b>	Support the RDBN Regional Broadband Committee as it develops knowledge and capacity to lead and integrate connectivity solutions in the north.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided access to planning resources via the Connected Communities Collaboration Site</li> <li>• Facilitated participation in the district-led Regional Connectivity Knowledge Network</li> <li>• Facilitated RDBN involvement in federal regulatory reform</li> </ul>	Promote regional connectivity planning and coordination; encourage regional district and Indigenous collaboration on connectivity solutions; creates collective and coordinated participation in federal regulatory reform.	<b>Investments in Region: \$2.3M</b>  <b>Connectivity Projects:</b> CityWest-RDBN transport \$1,934,709  Boer Mountain                      \$19,075 Vanderhoof                      \$250,000 Vanderhoof/Fort St. James \$45,294
<b>Regional District of Kitimat Stikine,</b> <b>Peace River Regional District,</b> <b>Northern Rockies Regional Municipality,</b> <b>Regional District of Fraser-Fort George,</b> <b>Fraser Valley Regional District</b>	Staff-level engagement to advise on approaches to connectivity strategy development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided access to planning resources via the Connected Communities Collaboration Site</li> </ul>	Capacity building at staff level, to support board.	Houston                      \$44,239 Willowvale                      \$19,075

# Connectivity & Connected Communities

(Last Updated: November 20, 2020)

## Southern Interior Region:

**Connectivity Investments: \$6.8M** (Jaffrey, East Kootenay various, West Kootenay various, Roosevelt Valley, Slocan Valley, Burton, St. Leon to Trout Lake, Edgewood/Fauquier area, Trail/Nelson area, North Kootenay Lake area, Wyndell, Creston and Valley, Arrow Lakes, Kimberley, Wasa, Six Mile, Field, Brisco, Spillimacheen)

## Connected Communities Engagements

Community/Organization	Engagement	Activities	Value/Impact	Investment
Columbia Basin Regional Last-mile Initiative	Support local Governments in the Columbia Basin Region through connectivity coordination efforts to accelerate the communities’ digital readiness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Facilitating peer to peer discussions with other regions</li></ul>	The regional broadband committee has expanded its mandate to plan end-to-end regional connectivity solutions.	<b>Investments in Proximity: \$6.8M</b>
			The Ktunaxa Nation is an active member of the regional broadband committee, demonstrating an effective local/Indigenous peer-to-peer collaboration model replicable in other regions.	Jaffray Upgrades \$30,288
				East Kootenays Last Mile \$24,249
				Rooseville Valley Fibre \$1,403,500
Slocan Valley	Support mayors of Slocan, Silverton new Denver and RDCK representatives to plan last-mile service delivery, to leverage Columbia Basin Broadband Corporation investments in high-speed backbone in the area and prepare for federal funding opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Participated in local support team (FLNRORD, Columbia Basin Broadband Corporation, community Economic Development Officer) to help guide and support the mayors’ learning and planning process.</li><li>Provided planning tools and resources.</li></ul>	Aggregating service demand via collaborative planning improves local connectivity investment business cases; mayors increase capacity to analyze options, recognize opportunities and collaborate with local service providers to attract investment.	<b>Connectivity Projects:</b>
			Local support team model proven effective to encourage and support	Slocan Valley Transport \$3,378,000
				Burton Wireless Upgrades \$33,086
				West Kootenay Region Transport Upgrades \$35,498
				St. Leon to Trout Lake Upgrades \$10,734

## Connectivity & Connected Communities

(Last Updated: November 20, 2020)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitated access to subject matter experts as required.</li> </ul>	<p>local leaders to lead and achieve connectivity goals.</p> <p>Columbia Basin Trust investment in transport fibre, and recently expanded mandate of local broadband committee to include last mile solutions provides the basis for a regional, digital transformation envisioned by local mayors, who are collaborating to learn and embrace their role in digital transformation.</p>	<p>Edgewood, Fauquier Area Upgrades \$51,066</p> <p>Trail – Nelson Transport \$500,000</p> <p>North Kootenay Lake Transport/Last Mile \$120,322</p> <p>North Kootenay Lake Last Mile \$276,834</p> <p>Wynndel Upgrades \$105,212</p> <p>Creston Valley Upgrades \$391,819</p> <p>Arrow Creek \$18,025</p> <p>Creston \$19,075</p> <p>Kimberley – Wasa Transport \$300,000</p> <p>Kimberley, Six Mile \$41,002</p> <p>Field, BC Upgrade \$12,254</p> <p>Brisco, Spillimacheen \$29,775</p> <p>Kimberley \$19,075</p> <p>Spillimacheen \$19,075</p>
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Vancouver Island Region:



# Connectivity & Connected Communities

(Last Updated: November 20, 2020)

**Investments in Region: \$8.2M** (Connected Coast, Alert Bay, Port Hardy, Port McNeill, Shelter Point, Hornby/Denman Islands, Mt. Blenheim)

**Connected Communities Engagements:**

Community/Organization	Engagement	Activities	Value/Impact	Investment
<b>Strathcona Regional District/ Connected Coast Initiative</b>	Supported Strathcona Regional District in initial community engagement for the Connected Coast project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported 7 Connected Coast community engagements promoting the importance and value of regional and community-led connectivity planning. (Kyuquot, Quadra Island, Zeballos, Sayward, Cortes Island, Tahsis, Gold River)</li> </ul>	Connected Coast will enable high-speed connectivity to more than 150 communities from Haida Gwaii to, and including, coastal Vancouver Island. Regional collaboration and planning readies communities to leverage the value of Connected Coast as an economic development catalyst.	<b>Investments in Proximity: \$8.2M</b>  <b>Connectivity Projects:</b> <div>Connected Coast \$7,036,138</div> <div>Connected Coast \$998,197</div> <div>Alert Bay \$19,075</div> <div>Port Hardy \$19,075</div> <div>Port McNeill \$44,239</div> <div>Shelter Point \$44,239</div> <div>Hornby and Denman Islands \$15,000</div> <div>Mt Blenheim \$50,000</div>
<b>Village of Tahsis</b>	Support planning to identify strategic value of high-speed connectivity in context of community assets and goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided guidance and resources to support community engagement phase of connectivity planning.</li> <li>Facilitated relationships</li> </ul>	Village of Tahsis is on the path to digital readiness and poised to reap value from investments in Connected Coast. A value proposition for last-mile connectivity, based on strength of community assets and planning, can help to unlock last-mile funding. Connectivity planning actively supports reconciliation initiatives (Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation).	
<b>Southern Gulf Islands</b>	Supported Southern Gulf Island and Capital Regional District (CRD) with community engagements (Mayne, Pender, Saturna, Galiano) to collaborate on a comprehensive connectivity plan for the islands.			

# Connectivity & Connected Communities

(Last Updated: November 20, 2020)

## Connected Communities Cross Government Collaborations (To support regional engagements):

Community/Organization	Engagement	Activities	Value/Impact	Investment
<b>Future Cities Canada Community Solutions Network</b>	Connected Communities is an advisory member of the Government of Canada's and Evergreen's Future Cities Canada Community Solutions Network, providing recommendations on how to better support and leverage digital capacity and readiness resources for BC's rural and Indigenous communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly meetings to inform regional Smart strategies, profile BC connectivity planning leadership and attract national resources to support BC opportunities.</li> </ul>		
<b>Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)</b>	Facilitating FCM involvement in rural connectivity planning to better address rural and Indigenous communities' digital capacity needs, and to leverage connectivity investments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Included FCM 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Garth Frizzell in the JEDC UBCM 2020 Connectivity Panel.</li> <li>Assisted the Regional Connectivity Knowledge Network to leverage FCM in a coordinated approach to CRTC proceedings (opportunity to contribute to federal regulatory reform).</li> </ul>	<p>Harmonize UBCM/FCM connectivity priorities for informed advocacy efforts.</p> <p>Support Local Government in CRTC consultation hearings as needed.</p>	

# Connectivity & Connected Communities

(Last Updated: November 20, 2020)

<b>National, Provincial, and Regional parties of interest</b>	Identifying and engaging with an array of organizations and interests to better address rural and Indigenous communities' digital capacity needs, and to leverage connectivity investments.	Engagements include but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)</li> <li>• Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM)</li> <li>• UBCM Area Associations (NCLGA, AVICC)</li> <li>• Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA)</li> <li>• Coastal First Nations Great Bear Initiative Society (CFN)</li> <li>• First Nations Technology Council</li> <li>• Future Cities Canada</li> <li>• Innovation Island, Innovate BC</li> <li>• Develop NS (provincial broadband lead)</li> <li>• Ontario Rural Caucus (local government led regional connectivity consortium)</li> </ul>		
<b>FLNRORD/JEDC</b>	Memorandum of Understanding between JEDC and Rural Development to collaborate on building connectivity capacity among rural leaders, recognizing connectivity as catalyst for building sustainable rural economies.			

## Connectivity & Connected Communities

(Last Updated: November 20, 2020)

<b>MIRR/JECD Joint Office</b>	<p>Work with JO to support UNDRIP/DRIPA initiatives given connectivity is seen as significant lever for economic reconciliation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current DRIPA focused engagements include Coastal First Nations and Carrier Sekani Tribal Council</li> </ul>			
<b>Transitioning Communities Impacted by Mill Closures</b>	<p>Connected Communities has been providing guidance, sharing knowledge and insights with Rural Development colleagues to support transitioning communities impacted by mill closures.</p>		Coordinated, cross-government collaborations help to fill local government capacity gaps while building local capacity to use connectivity as an economic catalyst.	
<b>Union of BC Municipalities</b>	<p>Engaging UBCM in regional connectivity planning, to support and strengthen local leader capacity building efforts, while enabling UBCM to increase its knowledge and understanding of connectivity as an economic investment catalyst and the role it can play to support members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invited to participate in UBCM Area Associations (NCLGA, AVICC) to increase their understanding of connectivity planning</li> <li>• Engaged UBCM to participate in, and support, the district-led Regional Connectivity Knowledge Network.</li> </ul>		

## INFORMATION NOTE

### Advice to Deputy Minister

**DATE:** December 21, 2020

**CLIFF#:** 114320

**ISSUE:** Connectivity Policy Framework

**BACKGROUND:**

Connectivity, through both broadband internet and cellular service, is foundational to several government priorities for rural and First Nations communities. It is also interdependent with multiple sectors, organizations and stakeholders that all point to connectivity as an underlying requirement, to advance the socio-economic and wellbeing benefits of communities across the province.

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**DISCUSSION:**

s.13

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Attachments: ATT 1 - Connectivity Policy Framework  
ATT 2 - Connectivity Policy Framework Cabinet Submission

Contact: Susan Stanford, ADM, Phone #250-580-7459

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## DECISION NOTE

### Advice to Deputy Minister

**DATE:** December 9, 2020

**CLIFF#:** 114235

**ISSUE:** Request for Information related to the NextGen Telecommunications Procurement Project.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

In July 2011, the Telecommunications Deal was signed between TELUS and twelve Greater Public Sector Entities which include core government, crown corporations and health authorities. Three agreements comprise the Telecommunications Deal – Telecommunications Service Master Agreement (TSMA); Strategic Relationship Agreement (SRA); and Connecting British Columbia Agreement (CBCA). The Deal has recently entered into the optional extension period and will come to an end in July 2023.

The NextGen Telecommunications Procurement Project team is working closely with the Buyers Group Entities to determine what core telecommunication services will need to be procured to satisfy their future business requirements. In alignment with direction received from the Deputy Ministers' Committee on Procurement and Strategic Contracts (DMCPSC), the team continues to work in collaboration with Legal Services Branch, Procurement Services Branch and the Strategic Partnerships Office to obtain these services through a future procurement and to ensure that this procurement aligns with the Province's policies and strategies.

To meet the Buyers Group Entities' future business requirements, the project team needs to consider available telecom services in the marketplace, some of which are new services and are based on advancing technology. These services should be included in the scope of the procurement. The project team is also considering a new contract model that could be used to acquire these services.

The project team has determined that engagement with the marketplace prior to entering a formal procurement process will validate its assumptions on these services and help gauge interest in the new contracting model.

The information gathered through the Request for Information (RFI) can be used in the Business Case that will go to Treasury Board.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

A Request for Information (RFI) is a mechanism to engage with the marketplace prior to the start of a formal procurement. It is a non-binding engagement and does not commit the Province to any potential future contract(s).

The RFI is not a pre-qualification step, rather it enables the information obtained through this process to be used to inform potential competitive process(es) conducted by the entities either collectively or individually.

Although the RFI will provide opportunity for the marketplace to provide feedback, there is a possibility that, due to confidentiality concerns, the information received may not be complete.

## OPTIONS:

### Option 1: Post the RFI (earliest target is mid-December, latest target is mid-January)

#### Pros:

- Will receive input from the marketplace about telecom services, service delivery and contracting models; this information can inform the business case.
- May be used to inform competitive processes conducted by the Buyers Group.
- Valuable marketplace information, including confidence that the market will respond to a potential Request for Proposal; will be available to inform the business case, and the marketplace will be aware of a potential future procurement.

#### Cons:

- Project resources will be diverted to the RFI process.
- Possibility that the feedback provided by the marketplace may not be complete due to vendors' confidentiality concerns.
- Condenses future timeline available to complete the project.

**Note:** If posting after mid-January, contract transition services will be needed at the end of the TSMA term to provide additional time for the procurement process. A Notice of Intent may be required.

### Option 2: Do not post an RFI

#### Pros:

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#### Cons:

- Will not receive input from the marketplace about telecom services, service delivery and contracting models; this information can inform the business case.
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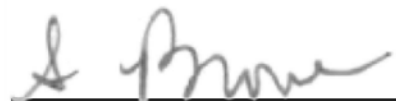
## RECOMMENDATION:

### Option 1: Post the RFI (earliest target is mid-December, latest target is mid-January)

(please circle)  
**APPROVED**

**NOT APPROVED**

**OPTION** 1



**Shauna Brouwer**  
**Deputy Minister**

December 10, 2020

**Date**

Attachment: RFI Objectives and Timelines (PPT)  
Contact: Roman Mateyko, Executive Director NextGen Telecommunications Project, ICT 250-952-9559

## DECISION NOTE

### Advice to Deputy Minister

**DATE:** December 16, 2020

**CLIFF#:** 114314

**ISSUE:** Optimizing the effectiveness of Deputy Minister Committees for Digital and Data

**BACKGROUND:**

The Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Citizens' Services is responsible for chairing both the DM-level Digital Investment Board (Investment Board) and the DM-level Integrated Data Board (Data Board).

The Investment Board's primary purpose is to exercise delegated authority from Treasury Board (2012) to allocate government's minor IM/IT capital envelope. Its core responsibilities are to prioritize government's IM/IT investments and ensure the most efficient use of these resources. Over the last year, the Investment Board has also reviewed broader digital initiatives, including the OCIO's reviews on large IT failures, IT shared services and the IT operating model of government. The Investment Board meets monthly and includes eight Deputy Ministers and Associate Deputy Ministers from across government; the Secretary to Treasury Board has always been a member.

In 2020-21, Treasury Board allocated \$110M to the board to govern, slightly down from \$120M allocated in 2019/20 but greater than the roughly \$90M allocated in years previous. To date in FY20/21 the Investment Board has reviewed ten capital requests, approving nine of them. The Government Chief Information Officer, with authority to approve funding and change requests less than \$750K, has reviewed and approved an additional 17 projects.

The Data Board was established in 2016 as a project board to provide oversight on the development of new cross-government data programming for the BC government, notably what is now the Data Innovation Program (DIP). The DIP focuses on integrating person-specific data for population-level analysis; as such, the makeup of the board was primarily oriented towards Deputy Ministers of ministries with large data holdings related to citizens uses of social programs. Over the last 18 months, the IDB has primarily focussed on discussions related to cross-government data governance, decision-making and projects as well as oversight of Government's Data Roadmap. The Data Board meets every two months and includes 11 Deputy Ministers and Associate Deputy Ministers from across government as well as an Assistant Deputy Minister from the Premier's Office.

**DISCUSSION:**

Under the current governance supported by the Office of the Chief Information Officer, deputy-level decisions and guidance are made on matters related to a) investments in information technology and b) person-centred data initiatives. As well, deputies have championed, under the Data Board, the deliverables included in Government's recently-completed Data Roadmap (e.g. a new data job family, a data gender standard). This represents just a slice of the activities within the digital and data spaces – for example, currently there is no deputy-level governance for the Digital Framework, IT shared services, information management or government's web presence and associated services.

With the release of new mandate letters, as well as broader priorities of ministries, a host of digital and data initiatives currently have no deputy-level governance. For Citizens' Services, mandate requirements related to open data, evidence-based decision-making and race-based data will require executive governance; however, so will amendments to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*,

improving accessibility of the Government of BC's website, implementation of a new digital operating model and an updated delivery model for IT shared services and updating BC's Digital Framework.

While a number of these initiatives can be folded under the current governance – e.g. open data under the Data Board; Digital Framework under the Investment Board – doing so would perpetuate a disconnect between data decisions and digital decisions. Technology and data are critical to the success of almost every government initiative. This has been made even more clear over the last ten months as data has both informed decision-making on COVID-19 as well as been a critical input into every technology application developed by government.

Finally, it is important to note that the OCIO currently provides secretariat support for both the Data Board and the Investment Board. With limited capacity due to fiscal constraints within the ministry, having a single committee would free up resources to support mandate priorities, including the establishment of ADM-level governance for data (there currently is none).

### OPTIONS:

**Option 1:** Combine the Investment Board and Data Board into a single DM committee with oversight responsibility for digital and data and choose one DM from each sector (See current and proposed membership in Appendix A)

#### *Benefits*

- Provides integrated decision-making and oversight on, and championing of, key mandate initiatives (e.g. race-based data, evidence-based decision-making) as well as other priorities such as FOIPPA amendments and the Digital Framework
- Reduces burden on both deputy minister as well as the secretariat activities within the OCIO
- Ensures all sectors are represented at the decision-making table on all matters related to digital government and data management

#### *Risks*

- May be difficult to address all matters requiring DM decisions in a single 1.5 hour meeting per month – recommend that DMs consider whether they have enough time to make all required decisions after completing the first three meetings of the reconstituted board.

**Option 2:** Maintain two separate DM boards with all decisions on digital government handled at the monthly meeting of the Investment Board and all decisions on data and information management made at the bi-monthly Data Board

#### *Benefits*

- Ensures sufficient time made for both the digital and data decisions required of deputies
- Provides deputy-level governance for broader data and information priorities

#### *Risks*

- The absence of an integrated committee will lead to duplicative discussions between both the Investment and Data Boards
- Maintains a heavy burden on both deputies and secretariat supports in the OCIO

### RECOMMENDATION: Option 1

*(please circle)*

**APPROVED**

**NOT APPROVED**

**OPTION \_\_\_\_\_**

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**Shauna Brouwer**  
**Deputy Minister**

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**Date**

Attachment: Appendix A: Proposed Board Membership

Contact: Hayden Lansdell, 250 415-0118

### Appendix A – Proposed Membership for a DM Board on Integrated Data and Digital Investment Board.

The current IDB and DIB have limited cross-over in membership. A new board would require renewed and balanced representation from across key sectors: Finance, Justice, Social, Health, Natural Resources, Education, Economy, Transportation and PO.

	Proposed NEW MERGED Board	Data Board	Investment Board
<b>Chair and Secretariat</b>			
Shauna Brouwer	y	y	y
CJ Ritchie	y	y	y
<b>Finance Sector</b>			
Heather Wood	y		y
<b>Justice Sector</b>			
Mark Sieben			y
Richard Fyfe	y		
Tara Richards		y	
<b>Social Sector</b>			
Allison Bond	y	y	y
David Galbraith		y	y
<b>Health Sector</b>			
Christine Massey		y	
Peter Pokorny	y	y	y
<b>Natural Resource Sector</b>			
Kevin Jardine	y	y	
<b>Education Sector</b>			
Shannon Baskerville		y	
Scott MacDonald	y	y	
<b>Economy Sector</b>			
Bobbi Plecas	y		y
<b>Transportation Sector</b>			
Kaye Krishna	y		
<b>Premier's Office</b>			
Eric Kristianson		y	
Silas Brownsey		y	