



December 3, 2019

Ref: 112001

Peter Luckham  
Chair, Islands Trust Council  
200-1627 Fort Street  
Victoria BC V8R 1H8

Dear Peter Luckham:

Thank you for meeting with the Ministry of Citizens' Services at the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) conference on September 26, 2019 in Vancouver and discussing the concerns from the Islands Trust regarding the Connected Coast project.

The Connected Coast project involves the installation of a new sub-sea backbone transport fibre cable from Prince Rupert to Vancouver with landings at multiple coastal communities along its route. The project does not include last-mile builds, but once the Connected Coast is completed, the new fibre backbone will enable additional capacity at the landing sites.

The project was a joint submission by CityWest Cable & Telephone Corporation and the Strathcona Regional District to the federal Connect to Innovate Program and is jointly funded by the provincial Connecting British Columbia Program and the federal government. The scope of the project has now been finalized. However, there is an opportunity to start complementary projects by adding new landing sites that extend from the Connected Coast project. Additional landing sites and last-mile projects may have different project leads and timelines.

Currently, TELUS has confirmed that Galiano, Mayne, Denman and Hornby Islands have sufficient transport capacity to the islands. The primary issue is the lack of last-mile infrastructure to deliver high-speed internet services to the homes. To help determine the best solution for the Southern Gulf Islands, connectivity planning is taking place through the Capital Regional District. Please visit: <https://www.crd.bc.ca/project/connectivity-planning-in-the-southern-gulf-islands> for more information on dates and locations of the engagement sessions. We trust that the results of these consultations will allow the communities to develop a plan that will enable them to work with a service provider on a solution that best meets their unique needs.

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In addition, the Comox Valley Regional District received a grant from the provincially funded Connecting British Columbia Program to develop a connectivity infrastructure plan for the communities of Denman and Hornby Islands. Additional funding support was provided by the Island Coastal Economic Trust.

The Province is working closely with telecommunications companies and with the Government of Canada to lay the groundwork – through broadband infrastructure – to help internet service providers connect more BC communities. Recently, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission issued a second call for applications of the \$750-million Broadband Fund.

Intake details can be found here: <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2019/2019-372.htm>.

We encourage you to continue to champion this initiative for the Gulf Island residents and work with the Strathcona Regional District to maximize the potential benefits of the Connected Coast project including the safe and reliable improvement of internet connectivity throughout the Islands Trust Area.

Thank you again for meeting with us at UBCM. If you have any questions regarding connectivity programs, please contact Howard Randell at 250 415-6867, or by email at [NetworkBC@gov.bc.ca](mailto:NetworkBC@gov.bc.ca).

Sincerely,



Jill Kot  
Deputy Minister

pc: Susan Stanford, Assistant Deputy Minister  
Information Communications Technology

Howard Randell, Executive Director  
Network BC