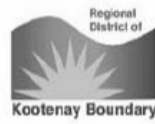


# MEMORANDUM



KTUNAXA  
NATION



Columbia  
Basin **trust**



**TO:** Columbia Shuswap Regional District, Ktunaxa Nation Council, Regional District of Central Kootenay, Regional District of East Kootenay, Regional District of Kootenay Boundary and Village of Valemount

**FROM:** Columbia Basin/Boundary Regional Broadband Committee

**DATE:** September 13, 2018

**SUBJECT:** For Endorsement: Columbia Basin/Kootenay Boundary Connectivity Strategy

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## **Purpose:**

1. This memo seeks endorsement from participating Boards and Councils in support of the Regional Broadband Committee's Connectivity Strategy. This is a companion memo to the more comprehensive connectivity strategy attached.

## **Regional Broadband Committee:**

2. The Regional Broadband Committee (RBBC) was established in 2014 and includes elected officials from Columbia Shuswap Regional District, Ktunaxa Nation Council, Regional District of Central Kootenay, Regional District of East Kootenay, Regional District of Kootenay Boundary and Village of Valemount.
3. The mission statement of the RBBC is:
  - *The Regional Broadband Committee is a united voice to advocate for all our constituents through leadership, knowledge sharing, and a common understanding of the current and future needs of high speed broadband internet services in the region.*

## **Enabling Regional Outcomes:**

4. The CRTC has declared broadband internet a basic telecommunications service and have defined a minimum Universal Service Objective (USO) outlining the basic connectivity levels that all Canadians should have.<sup>1</sup>
5. Adequate connectivity is a prerequisite for enablement of fundamental outcomes such as better health-care, education, public safety and overall quality of life.
6. Connectivity is key enabler for the regions' economic development goals.

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<sup>1</sup> Telecommunications Commission: Closing the Broadband Gap  
<https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/internet/internet.htm>

### **Connectivity Problem:**

7. Residents, business owners, farmers, students, health and technology professionals in the region are increasingly unable to keep up with their counterparts in larger centres because of inadequate connectivity.
8. The region has a small population and challenging geography for developing infrastructure. This combination has created a disparity of service between rural BC residents and urban counterparts. Within the Columbia Basin and Boundary regions this issue is particularly acute.
9. Traditional economic motivators are clear for internet providers and incumbent carriers: the more people living in an area, the more people there are to pay for service, and the required infrastructure.
10. Connectivity in the region fails<sup>2</sup> to meet the CRTC USO.
11. Community engagement by Columbia Basin Trust has continued to confirm connectivity issues to be one of the top challenges within the region.

### **Quantifying the Problem:**

12. The CRTC roughly estimates the cost to adequately connect rural Canada and the North at \$7 billion.<sup>3</sup>
13. The cost to adequately connect the Columbia Basin and Boundary regions could likely be in a magnitude of several-hundred million dollars.<sup>4</sup>
14. It is imperative that the region seek funding from all sources, federal, provincial and local governments as well as regional Trusts and industry partners.

### **Regional Goal:**

15. The essence of the goal is simple, that the residents and businesses within Columbia Basin and Boundary regions attain at minimum the standard defined by the CRTC Universal Service Objective (USO), ideally beyond the USO, and do so in a timely manner.
16. Timing of attaining the stated goal will be directly related to the regions' ability to coordinate and acquire grant funding.

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<sup>2</sup> Benchmarking Connectivity In BC – 2017 <https://www.northerndevelopment.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Connectivity-Handbook.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Broadband Connectivity in Rural Canada: Overcoming the Digital Divide: <http://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/INDU/report-11>, Page 24

<sup>4</sup> Costs to connect the region could vary considerably; depending on connectivity deployment methods cost to connect the region could range between \$150M to \$350M

**Need for a Regional Approach:**

17. The existence of a coordinated regional approach will increasingly become a prerequisite for government grant funding applications.
18. The RBBC strongly encourages the region to ensure that broadband grant applications are reflective of regional priority of need.
19. The RBBC encourages the regional districts and Ktunaxa Nation Council to continue to coordinate with Columbia Basin Trust's Broadband Initiative (Columbia Basin Broadband Corporation) in broadband related grant proposals.
20. Criteria for prioritizing a broadband project in the region:
  - Number of residents/households/businesses benefiting
  - Magnitude of connectivity gap
  - Cost per resident/household
  - Existence of willing funding partners
  - Existence of community champions
  - Existence of technical, project management, and financial expertise required to complete and operate a project
  - Long-term sustainability

**Building Awareness:**

21. The magnitude of rural connectivity challenges are not generally well known or understood in urban settings.
22. A coordinated regional approach will help draw awareness to this issue and provide a tangible roadmap for addressing the challenges.

**Endorsement:**

23. The RBBC seeks approval from each member Board/Council in the approach stated in the memo.