



# Victoria Smith

Senior Manager, Strategic Initiatives  
Strathcona Regional District

KEYNOTE

Why the Rural Digital Divide  
Matters More than Ever



# Shifting the Connectivity Landscape

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VICTORIA SMITH

SENIOR MANAGER STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

CANADA'S RURAL BROADBAND CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 12, 2019 NORTH BAY ON



A familiar story  
from the  
digital divide...



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Federation of 5  
municipalities and 4  
unincorporated  
electoral areas

10 Nations

Area 18,329km<sup>2</sup>

Population 44,671



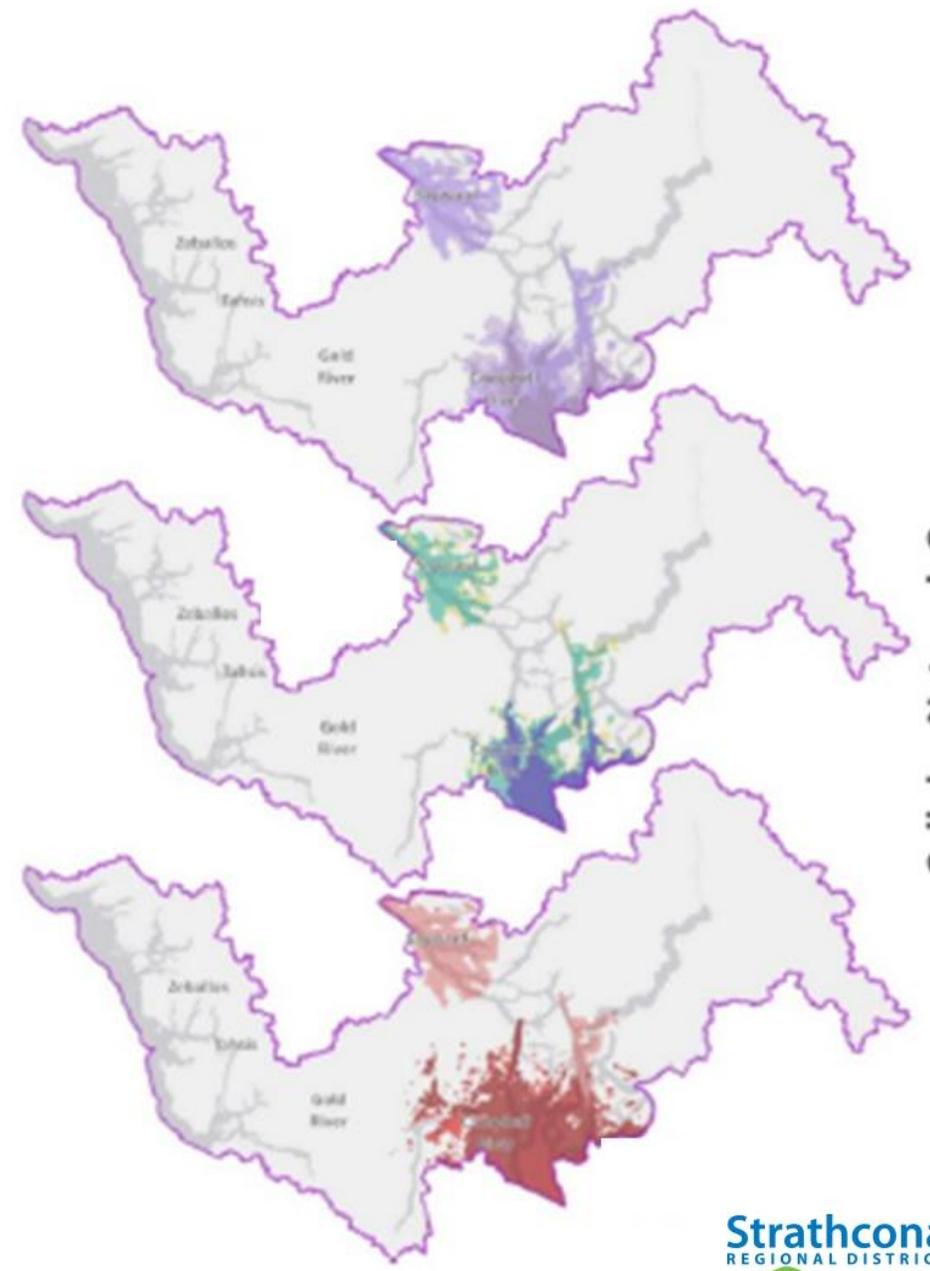
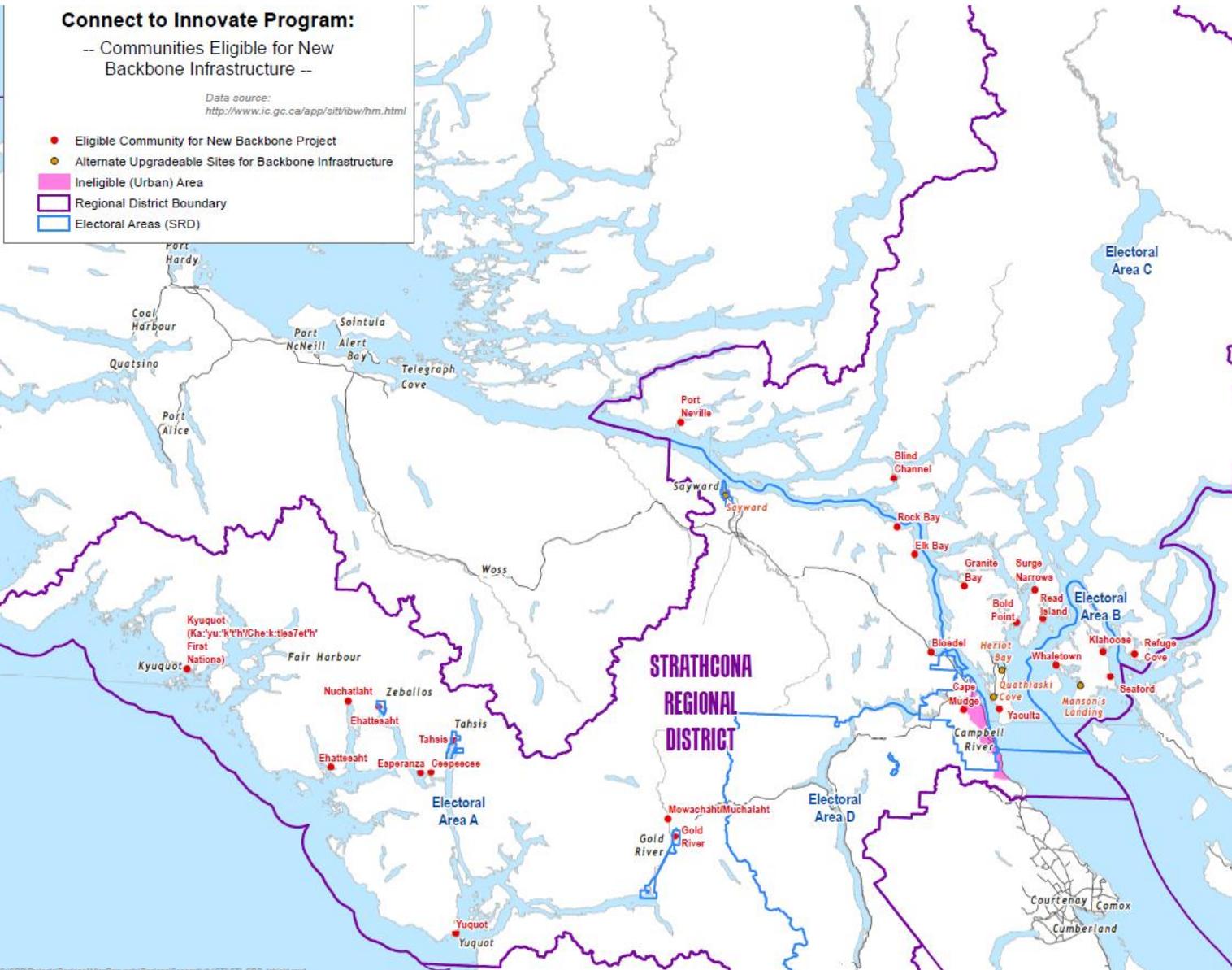


**Connect to Innovate Program:**

-- Communities Eligible for New Backbone Infrastructure --

Data source:  
<http://www.ic.gc.ca/app/sitt/bw/hm.html>

- Eligible Community for New Backbone Project
- Alternate Upgradeable Sites for Backbone Infrastructure
- Ineligible (Urban) Area
- ▭ Regional District Boundary
- ▭ Electoral Areas (SRD)



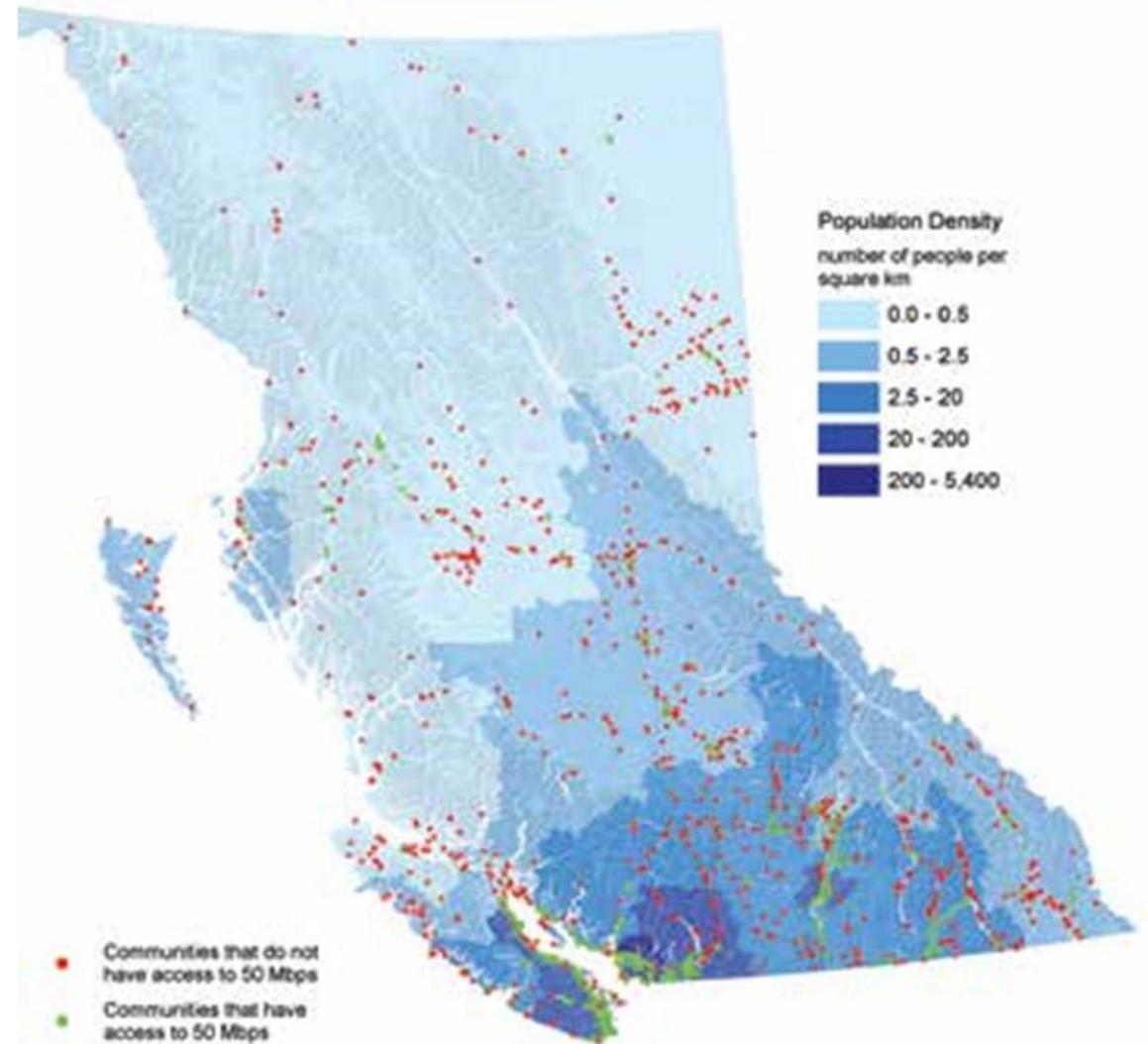
Cellular Network Coverage

# 50/10 Mbps

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30% rural households  
97% urban households

KPMG Connected Communities in BC  
ISED, CRTC



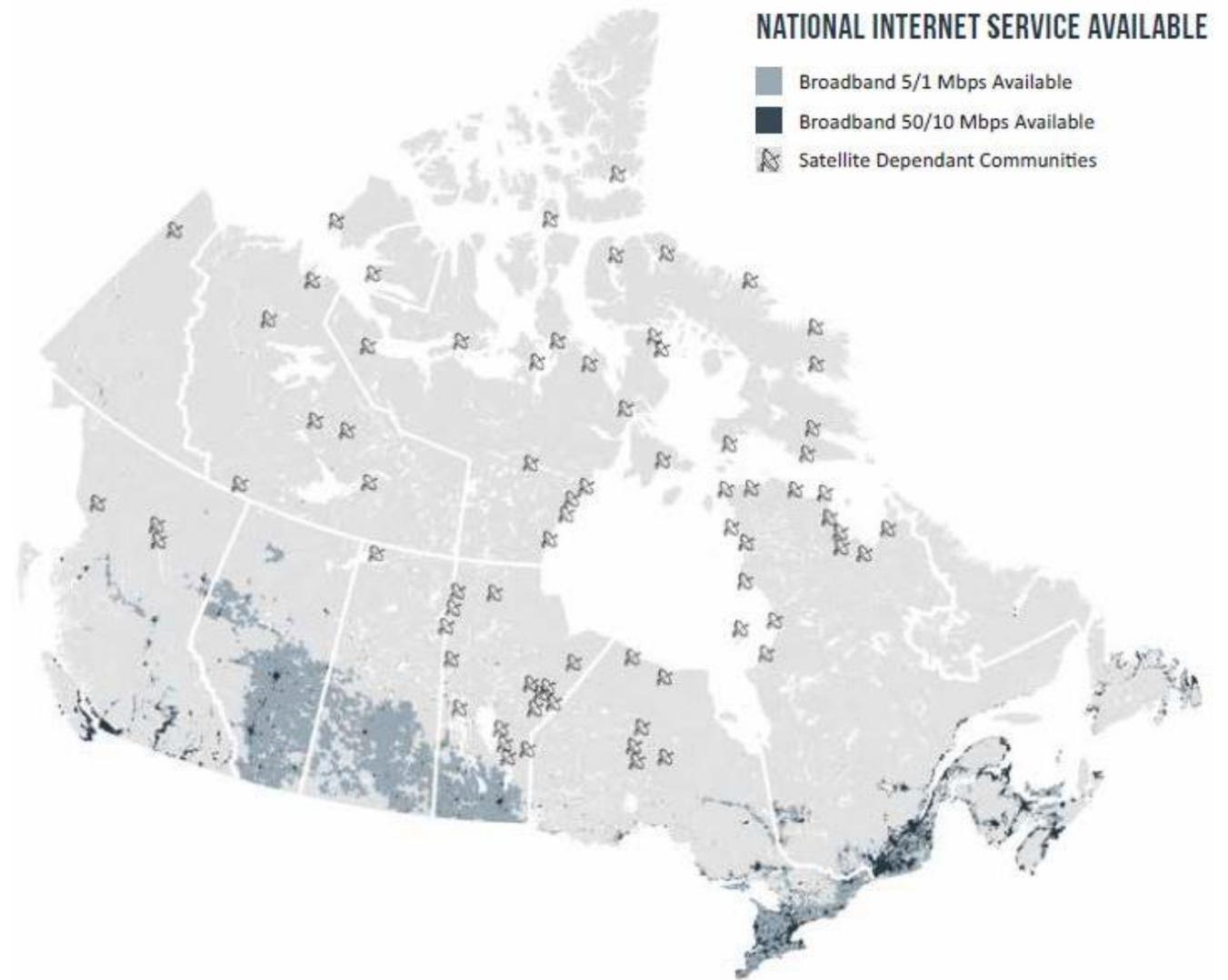
# 50/10 Mbps

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37% rural households  
24% Indigenous households

99% urban households

Canada's Connectivity Strategy 2019  
CRTC Communications Monitoring Report 2018



The digital divide  
is real and solving  
it matters

#bridgethedivide  
#ruralbroadband  
#interconnection





# Digital Opportunity

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 Virtual health

 Distance education

 Civic engagement

 Telecommuting

 Innovation

 Stewardship

 Economic Development

 Reconciliation

# Connected Communities BC:

Digital by Design

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## Case Study: The Village of Granisle



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e03Vo4LsYDs>

# Connected Communities BC: Digital by Design

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## Case Study: Heiltsuk Nation



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQJUWd5kTJg>

Collectively, we  
will shift the  
connectivity  
landscape.

“If we were to become one of the communities with access to this network, and could potentially have services that meet the latest CRTC service standards, it would be a great economic boost for our member businesses.”

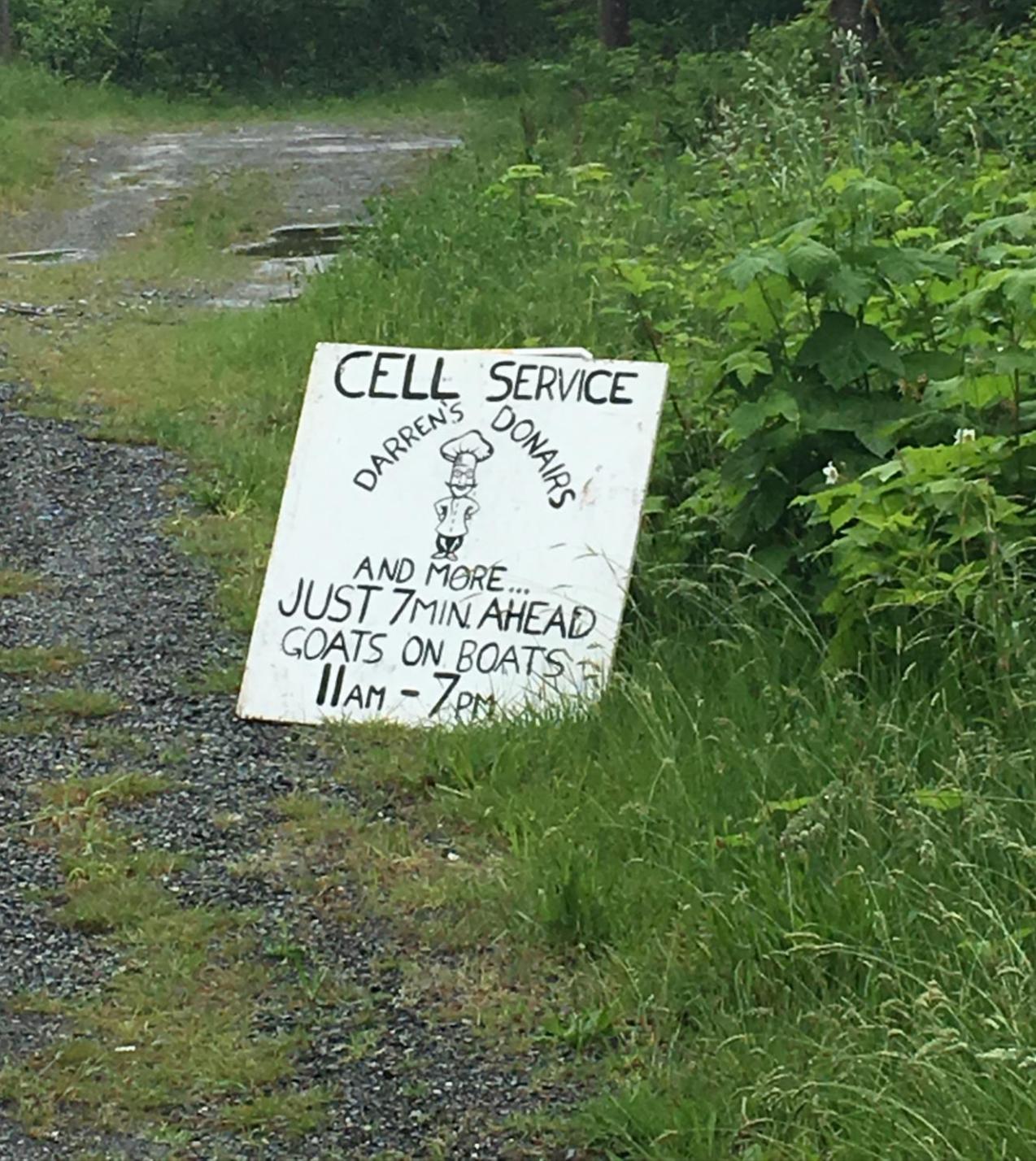
**Discovery Island Chamber  
of Commerce  
Quadra Island**

“NIC is now a provincial leader in classroom instruction using interactive video conferencing and web-based communications platforms. Still we see constant barriers due to a lack of sufficient, stable bandwidth. Programs that could connect our communities are often not feasible due to this lack of infrastructure. I have experienced first hand the need, the desire and the frustrations.”

**North Island College**

“Among the Kwakwaka speaking peoples there are many villages. Some of those villages are isolated and remote. In many instances the availability of health services in the form of nurses and doctors is next to non-existent. Improvements in broadband infrastructure could go a long way toward improving the lives of many of our isolated communities.”

**Kwakiutl District Council**



**Strathcona**  
REGIONAL DISTRICT



BUILDING REMOTE AND RURAL COMMUNITY  
CAPACITY THROUGH HIGH SPEED INTERNET



April 2017 **Strathcona Regional District Broadband Strategy**

Draft document for public discussion

New or improved broadband and cellular connectivity is the highest strategic priority of the Strathcona Regional District Board

# Connected Coast

- Subsea Fibre Optic backbone network (not last-mile)
- Est \$46M project funded through CTI, NDIT, ISC
- 3,400km cable
- 154 CTI eligible landing sites
  - 56 First Nation communities, 44 Nations
  - 13 Regional Districts





EAUFON

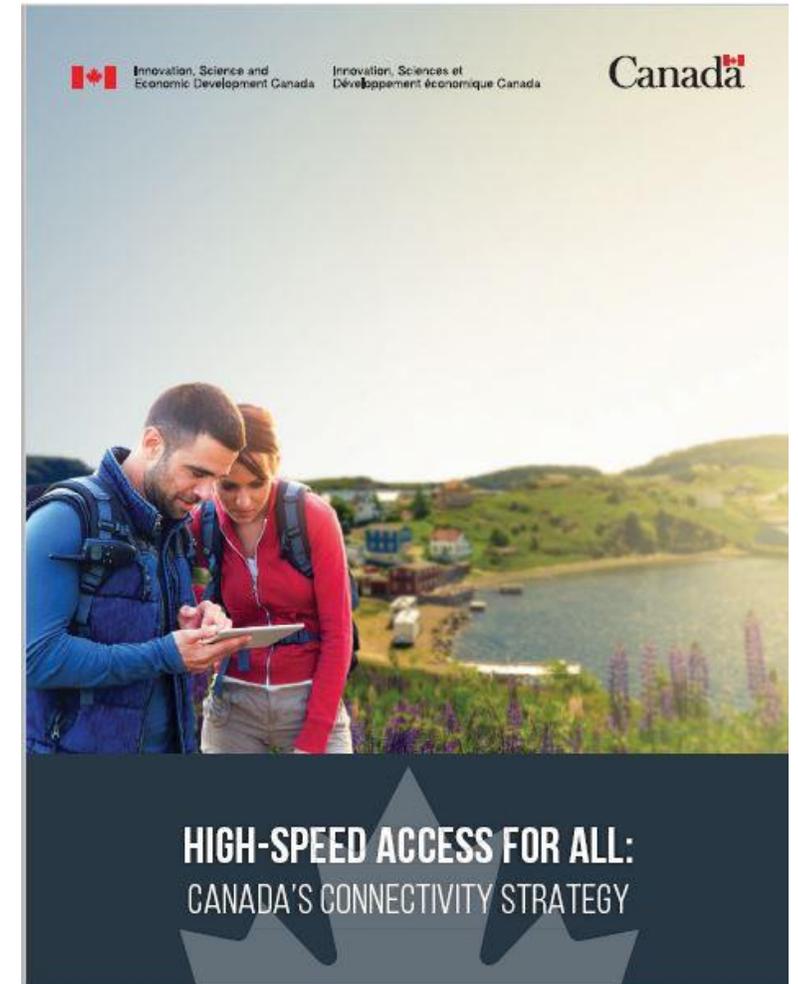


NORTH EAST SUPERIOR REGIONAL BROADBAND NETWORK

Alberta SuperNet

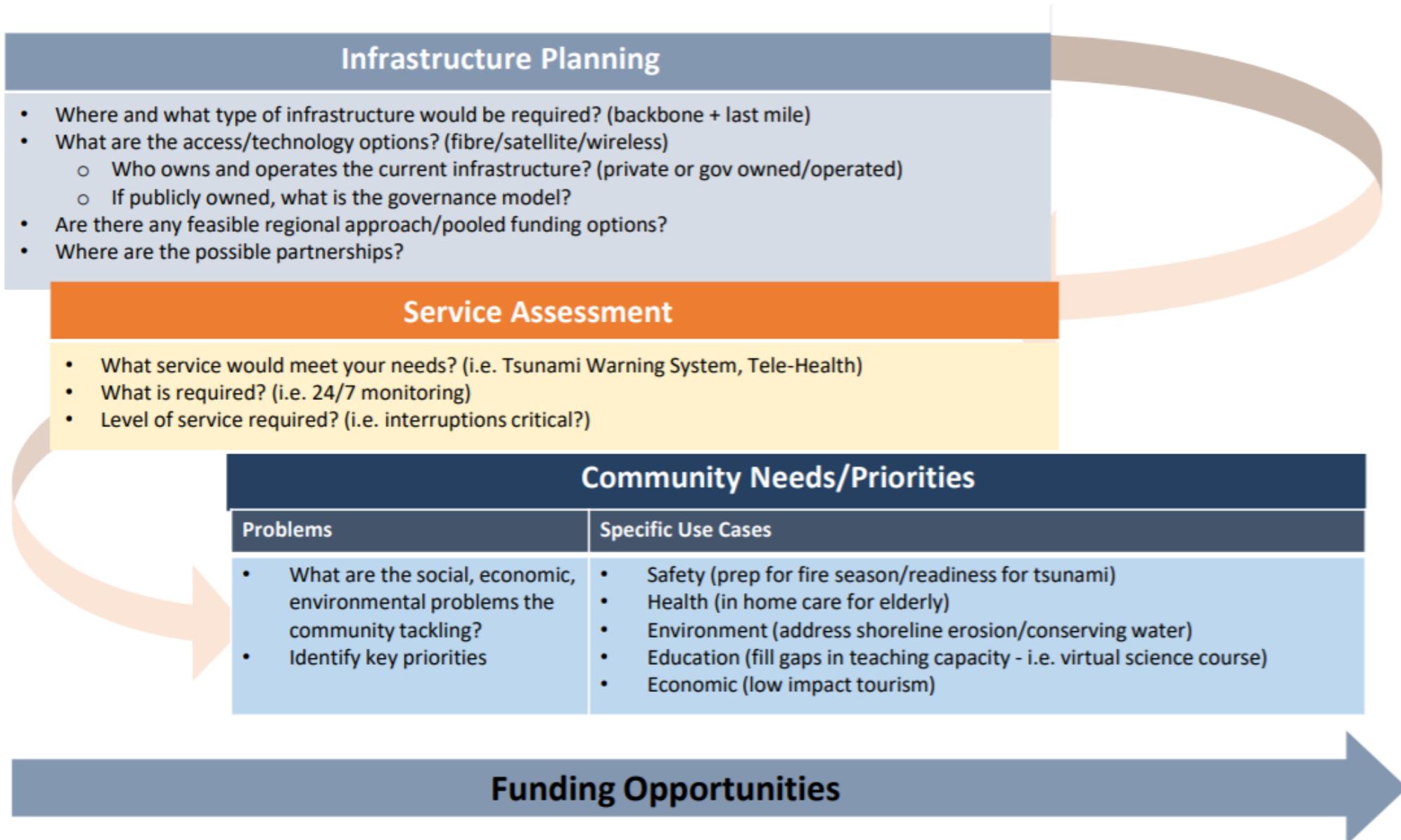


“Every Canadian will have access to high-speed internet by 2030, no matter where they are located in the country.”



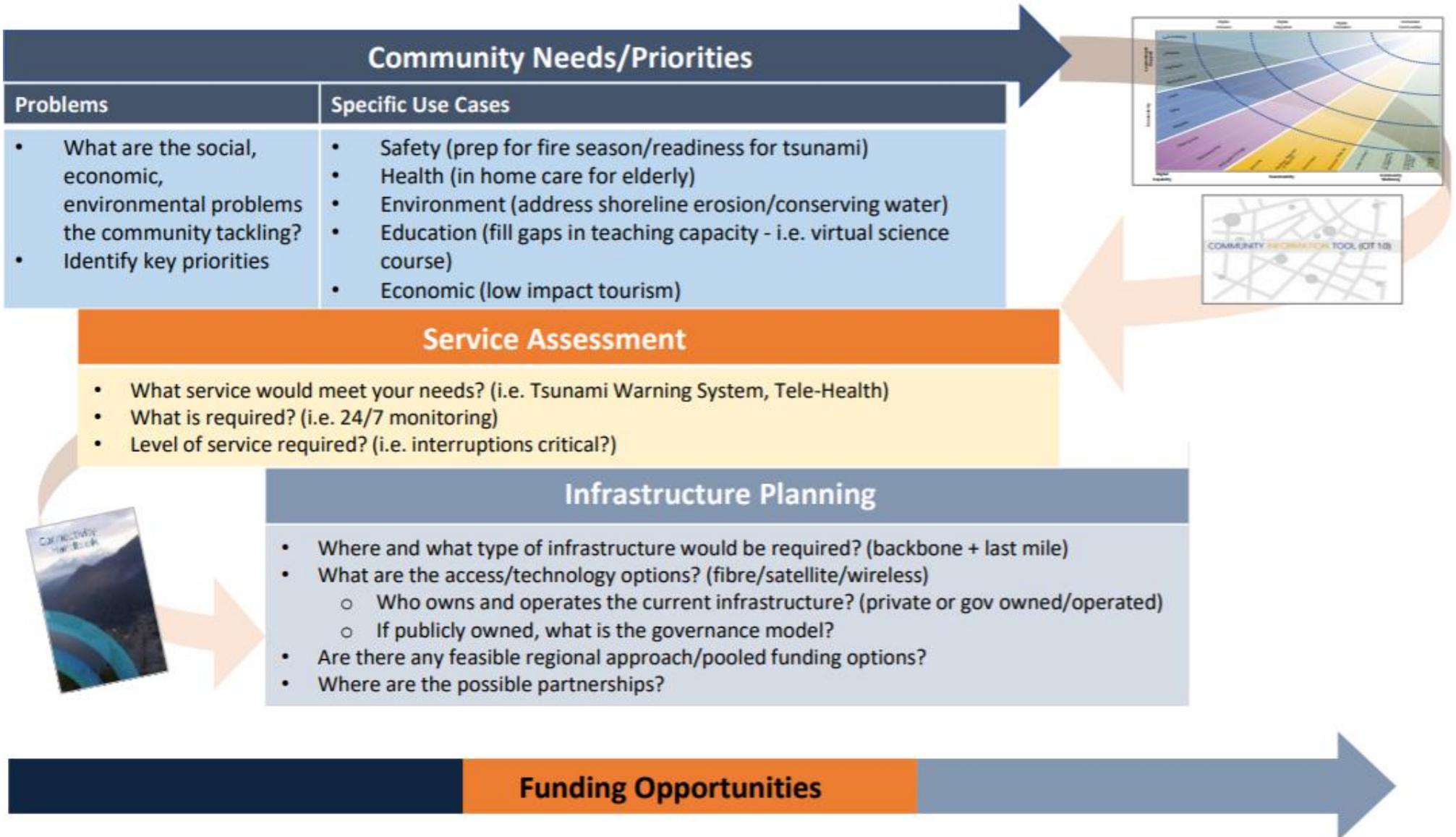
# Current Approach

Source: Connected Communities BC



# Connectivity Planning

Source: Connected Communities BC



**Diagram 2: The Whole-Community Approach to Telecommunications**



Source: Susan O'Donnell & Brian Beaton,  
Northern Public Affairs, October 2018



# Better Internet is Coming!

Let's Connect  
About the  
Possibilities.

The SRD is planning for better connectivity throughout the region. Learn about new infrastructure projects & share ideas on your community's digital future over coffee & treats.

Mon June 3 – Kyuquot Inn, Java Hut 7:30 – 9 pm  
Tues June 4 – Zeballos Community Hall 4 – 6 pm  
Wed June 5 – Sayward Heritage Hall 4 – 6 pm  
Thurs June 6 – Quadra Island Community Centre 7 – 9 pm  
Mon June 17 – Tahsis Recreation Centre, Gym 4 – 6 pm  
Tues June 18 – Gold River Arena Lounge 4 – 6 pm  
Wed June 19 – Cortes Island Mansons Hall 4 – 6 pm



This project made possible through funding provided by Island Coastal Economic Trust.

Space is limited, please contact the SRD to RSVP at 1-877-830-2990 ext: 6724 or email [rsvp@srd.ca](mailto:rsvp@srd.ca)



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