Connectivity Planning
in the Southern Gulf Islands

Backgrounder

Background

The Capital Regional District (CRD) is consulting with the communities of the Southern Gulf Islands (SGI) Electoral Area (Galiano, Mayne, Pender and Saturna Islands) about ways to improve broadband connectivity and how greater connectivity can advance each island's common goals of sustainable economic development, community health, and resilience.

The SGI region lags far behind the internet speeds identified by the Federal Government as a minimum standard. The persisting digital divide between urban areas and the SGI limits residents' access to emergency services, healthcare, climate adaptation, education, transportation, government services, economic diversification and more.

Each island's Official Community Plan states support for the expansion of electronic communications. In June 2019, the Islands Trust Council formally requested that the appropriate agencies of Canada and the Province "take steps to facilitate and fund the safe and reliable improvement of internet connectivity throughout the Trust Area." Additionally, in 2017, the Galiano Island Local Trust Committee's Telecommunication Special Advisory Planning Commission inventoried existing infrastructure and identified gaps in current services. The Committee found that a strong majority of residents were in favour of expanded connectivity. The islands all have different internet providers and different levels of connectivity, however, by working together, the region has the opportunity to advance regional solutions that support the individual needs of each island community.

Provincial and Federal granting agencies are now requesting community connectivity plans in order to ensure infrastructure investments are coordinated, scalable, provide value for money, and achieve priority objectives for the region. Our approach is to develop a connectivity plan that is community based, and can guide Internet Service Providers in their investment decisions, and encourage investment from other levels of government.

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Phase 1 - Digital Roadmap

The CRD is working with Network BC and the Ministry of Citizen Services Connected Communities program to develop a "Digital Roadmap" for the SGI through consultation with each island community. We will engage residents and different sectors in each island community to address the needs, benefits and trade-offs of greater connectivity, and its potential to support the social, economic, and sustainability goals of the region.

Join the Conversation!
Complete a survey and join us at a town hall on each island this fall and winter.

Phase 2 –Connectivity Design Strategy

This phase will consider how the community goals identified in phase 1 can be advanced through infrastructure design. It will take into account existing service hubs and will present the region with options for infrastructure and technology to advance each community's own connectivity goals, as identified in Phase 1.

Need More Information?

Visit *www.crd.bc.ca/sgiconnect*

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