

Shall We Improve Internet Connectivity on Denman and Hornby?

Denman Island's Internet Committee (DIIC) and Hornby's (HICEEC) are sharing their findings and are seeking your views. How we should proceed with acquiring improved internet connectivity? On November 3 there will be open houses at the New Horizons room on Hornby and at the Activity Centre on Denman. A strong community response will be an indicator to regulators and those who hold the purse strings of how important this issue is to our island communities. We encourage everyone to attend.

The following are some important subjects to be discussed in more detail at the open house meetings.

Current Situation on Our Islands

The national standard for internet service is that by 2021 ninety percent of households should have internet at speeds of 50 Mbps for downloads and 10 Mbps for uploads.

- Our surveys of island households found no respondents receiving that standard of service.
- Survey respondents identified slow, unreliable service negatively impacting their personal and professional livelihoods.
- 70% of islanders access the internet through Telus, 15-20% use Xplornet, the balance use Smart Hubs and cell phone tethering.

Why Improve Our Internet?

- Our households are increasingly engaged in demanding online activity – streaming conversations, distance education, essential business functions, challenging games, integrated musical and artistic collaborations and critical medical monitoring.
- Our businesses are getting more rooted in robust online interaction for promotion, sales, operations and administration.
- We have the ability to substitute keystrokes on our computers for considerable time, energy and expense consumed in travel.

Funding is Available

Government funds are available for connectivity improvement. In Budget 2019, the Federal Government committed that 95% of Canada's homes and businesses would have access to 50/10 Mbps service by 2026 and 100% by 2030. The investment will be \$5-6 Billion over the next decade.

- The CRTC's broadband fund provides \$750 Million to help bring adequate internet to underserved rural and remote areas. The federal Connect to Innovate program has \$500 Million for "backbone" and 'last mile' infrastructure for rural and remote areas. It will be open for applications this fall/winter. BC's Connecting British Columbia Program offers funding of \$50 Million (Budget 2019).
- The Connected Coast project will bring undersea fibre optic cable to 154 communities around both sides of Vancouver Island and onwards to Haida Gwaii and the north coast.

- Our project has obtained a grant of \$15,000 from BC for “strategy” and an additional grant of up to \$20,000 from a BC economic program, ICET. The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) supports our project with the provision of \$15,000 (through Denman Works and HICEEC).

Looking Ahead

We have contracted an internet technology design company to examine options for improving our internet. This company, Baylink Networks Inc is the firm that senior governments engaged to plan the implementation of their Connected Coast project. Baylink has developed a plan that would provide 100% fibre-optic connections to every household on Denman and Hornby within 2 years of receipt of funding from governments.

We have received a partnership proposal from Telus, wherein if we can obtain the needed government funding, Telus will provide the following:

- Provide fibre-optic connections to every household on Denman and Hornby islands, at an estimated total project cost \$11,565,000;
- Federal and Provincial government contributions to be determined;
- Telus would own the infrastructure, provide all current and future fibre-based market services, and user fees would be Telus standard;
- Telus contribution to total cost - \$2,585,000.

Other possibilities would be to contract an existing ISP to serve us using backbone capacity near our islands, or to do this through our own community ISP. We are currently examining these options, including their business feasibility.

What Does Our Community Need to Do ?

While our committees work to review technical options and attract funding, and keep our communities informed, at the heart of our initiative is a need to have clear, demonstrated understanding of our communities’ views – what do we want to do? A strong attendance and participation at our open houses will greatly assist our ability to progress.

PLEASE JOIN US AT THE OPEN HOUSES ON HORNBY AND DENMAN ON NOVEMBER 3.

- We’ll have the experts there to explain and discuss our possibilities.
- On Hornby from 10:15-1 pm at the New Horizons Centre. Refreshments provided.
- On Denman from 3-6pm at the Activity Centre. Childcare and refreshments.

*Please call Ty Runkle on Denman (250)702-1247 or Karen Ross on Hornby (250)335-1199
and let us know you’ll be coming
it will help us ensure that we have enough coffee and cookies for everyone
come regardless*