REPORT

To: Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee   Report Number: ADM-BIMC-001

From: Crystal Brown, Electoral Area Manager   Date: October 20, 2021

Subject: **Broadband Internet and Mobility Engagement Opportunities**

RECOMMENDATION #1:
That the Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee identify stakeholders, First Nations, and other parties that the Committee would like to engage with to determine their connectivity needs, challenges, and priorities across the region.

RECOMMENDATION #2:
That the Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee invite representatives from Northern Rockies Regional Municipality, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, and Regional District of Fraser-Fort George to a future Committee meeting to learn about their connectivity challenges and priorities, and discuss opportunities to work together.

RECOMMENDATION #3:
That the Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee invite representatives from the County of Grande Prairie, Saddle Hills County, and Clear Hills County, to a future Committee meeting to learn about their connectivity challenges and priorities, and discuss opportunities to work together.

RECOMMENDATION #4:
That the Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee identify service providers operating in the region that the Committee would like to invite to a future Committee meeting to communicate service needs, to learn about the service providers' connectivity plans for the region.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:
The role of the Standing Committee, as outlined in the Terms of Reference approved by the Regional Board, to set out the Committee's tasks on behalf of the Board, includes engagement with service providers and stakeholders, research and review of current technologies and market trends, examining funding opportunities, developing a connectivity work plan, and making recommendations to the PRRD Board regarding Broadband Internet and mobility policy(ies) that will fulfill the PRRD's connectivity vision.

To ensure that the Connectivity Strategic Plan is comprehensive, scalable, inclusive, and meets the needs of the community, local governments should engage with local ISPs, First Nations, funding partners, technical experts, government agencies, business and residents to understand the challenges and priorities of the community, identify goals, and addresses needs or gaps in service. Stakeholders, First Nations, local governments, internet and mobility service providers, and other parties that are identified by the Committee will be invited to meet with the Committee at a future meeting, or submit a written response to the Committee identifying their connectivity needs, challenges, and priorities.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

1. That the Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee provide further direction.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:

☒   Partnerships

    ☒ Collaboration with Local and First Nations governments

    ☒ Inter-provincial collaboration with Alberta local governments

☒   Advocacy

    ☒ Increased broadband connectivity for rural communities - Situational/Gap Analysis and Investment

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

None at this time.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):

None at this time.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

This report is in line with the following recommendations from the draft PRRD Connectivity Strategy Report:

> That the Regional Board engage stakeholders to identify all broadband requirements across the district and identify those stakeholders that may play a role as consumers or providers of such services.

> That the Regional Board engage with Broadband Internet and mobility providers operating within the PRRD to communicate service needs, identify gaps, and maximize their role in fulfilling the PRRD's Broadband vision.