Connectivity Update
Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee
April 2024

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Connectivity is foundational to Government priorities

BC's Economic Plan

The StrongerBC Economic Plan aggressively accelerates the timeline to connect all B.C. communities to high-speed internet and successfully close B.C.'s digital divide.

Declaration Act Calls to Action

4.36 Ensure every First Nations community in B.C. has high-speed internet services.

Ministry Mandate

Lead work to deliver connectivity throughout the province until all regions are connected to the high-speed network.
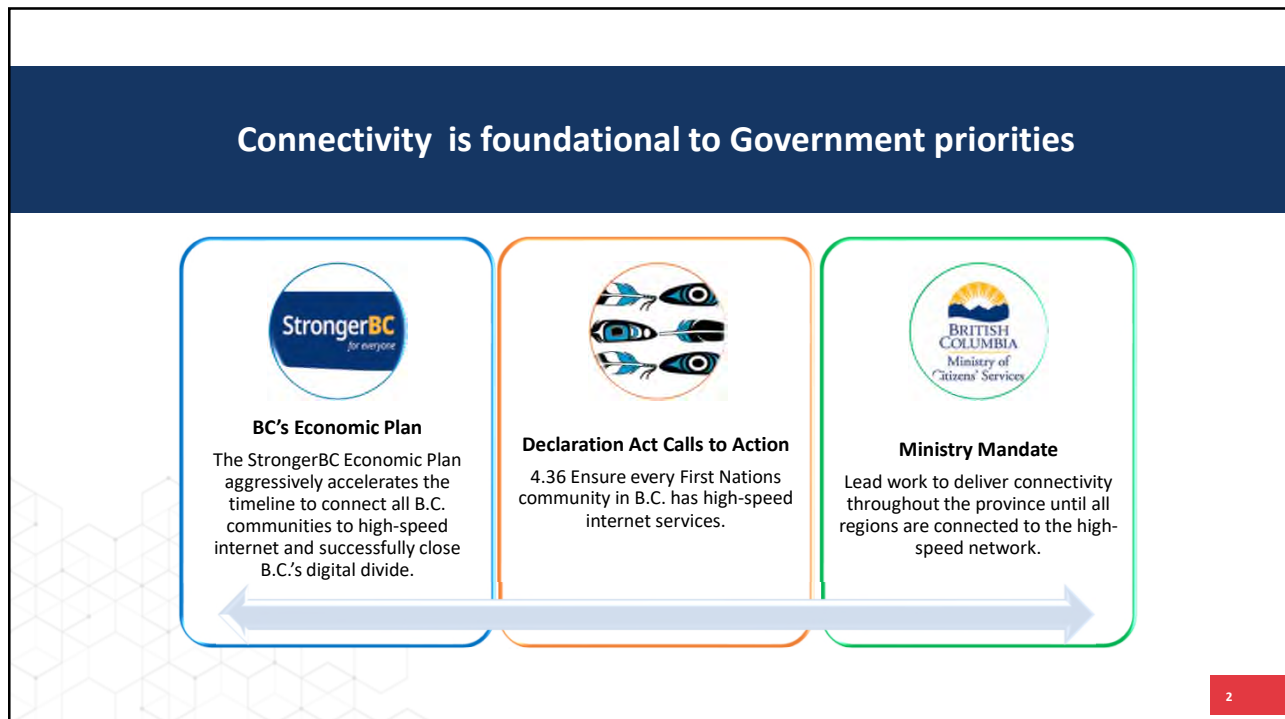
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Economic return from connectivity investments

The economic model developed by BC Stats analyzes the short- and long-term impacts of connectivity funding for rural regions of B.C.

KOOTENAY CONNECTIVITY
BENEFITS STUDY
PREPARED FOR MINISTRY OF CITIZENS' SERVICES

BC Stats

FALL 2022

NORTHERN B.C. CONNECTIVITY
BENEFITS STUDY
PREPARED FOR MINISTRY OF CITIZENS' SERVICES
BY BC STATS

BC Stats

REPORT 2: SUMMER 2023

INTERIOR B.C. CONNECTIVITY
BENEFITS STUDY
PREPARED FOR MINISTRY OF CITIZENS' SERVICES
BY BC STATS

BC Stats

REPORT 3: FALL 2023

COASTAL B.C. CONNECTIVITY
BENEFITS STUDY
PREPARED FOR MINISTRY OF CITIZENS' SERVICES
BY BC STATS

BC Stats

REPORT 4: WINTER 2023/24

The final economic study for the province is under development and will be released in Spring 2024.
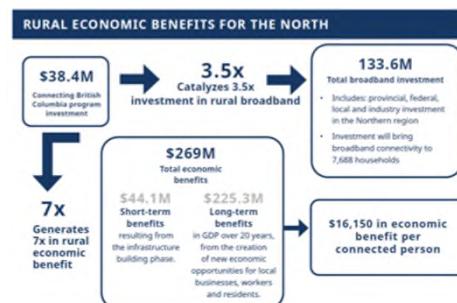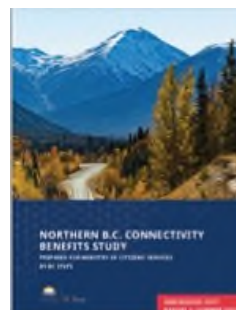
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Economic return from connectivity investments – Northern region
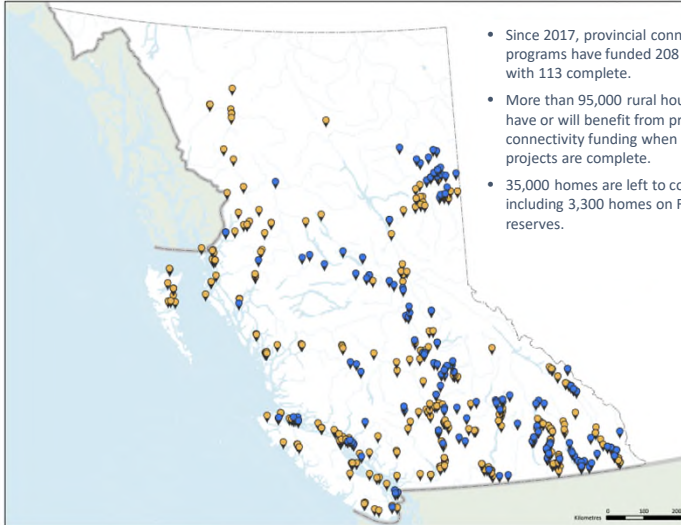
This study is due to be released in July 2023.

Connectivity investments in the North were analyzed by BC Stats as delivering **seven times** the economic return from approved provincial funding over the longer term.

Although the northern region has a lower population density than the Kootenays, the economic benefit per person is higher, with **$16,150** in benefit per connected person.

RURAL ECONOMIC BENEFITS FOR THE NORTH

$38.4M
Connecting British
Columbia program
investment

3.5x
Catalyzes 3.5x
investment in rural broadband

133.6M
Total broadband investment
- Includes: provincial, federal, local and industry investment in the Northern region
- Investment will bring broadband connectivity to 7,688 households

$269M
Total economic benefits

7x
Generates 7x in rural economic benefit

$44.1M
Short-term benefits
resulting from the infrastructure building phase.

$225.3M
Long-term benefits
in GDP over 20 years, from the creation of new economic opportunities for local businesses, workers and residents.

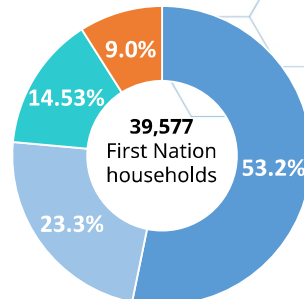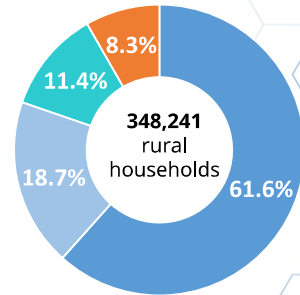$16,150 in economic benefit per connected person

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Province-wide Impact

- Since 2017, provincial connectivity programs have funded 208 projects, with 113 complete.
- More than 95,000 rural households have or will benefit from provincial connectivity funding when approved projects are complete.
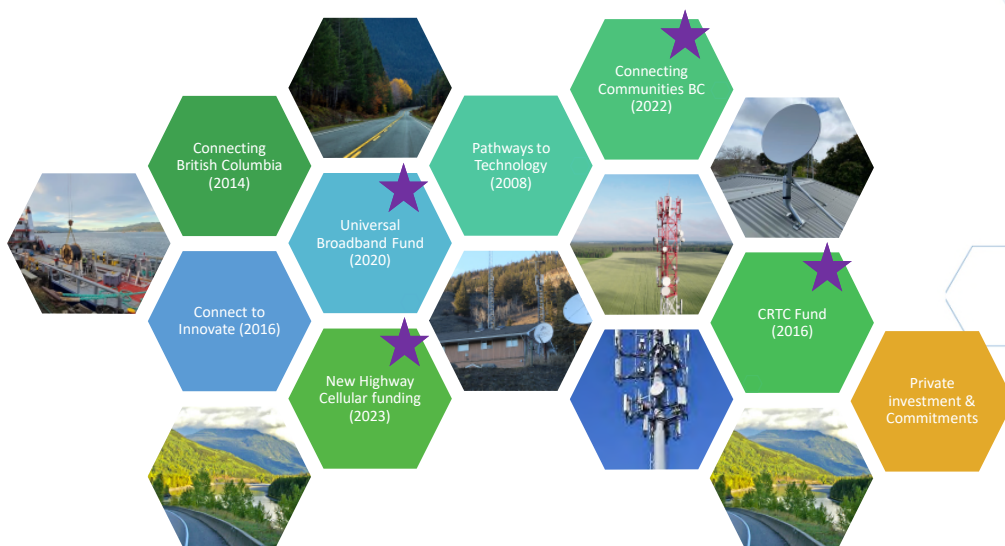- 35,000 homes are left to connect including 3,300 homes on First Nation reserves.

348,241 rural households

8.3%
11.4%
18.7%
61.6%

39,577 First Nation households

9.0%
14.53%
23.3%
53.2%

■ Served 2017   ■ Served
■ In progress   ■ Underserved

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Funding & Project Landscape

Connecting British Columbia (2014)

Pathways to Technology (2008)

Connecting Communities BC (2022)

Universal Broadband Fund (2020)

Connect to Innovate (2016)

New Highway Cellular funding (2023)

CRTC Fund (2016)

Private investment & Commitments

★ Funding still available

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Projects in progress

Intake 3 areas of focus

- Intake 3 closed on March 14th.
- The intake considered enhanced data analysis of underserved areas including projects approved, in progress and data from multiple sources.
- The intake provided more granular data by zone in focused areas.
- A total of 3 project applications have been received for Zone 3, one from each intake.

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Highway cellular

- There are 15,000 kms of highway in B.C.

- Currently there are 8,900 Kms of highway with LTE cellular coverage.

- The Connecting British Columbia program has funded cellular projects that will connect 532 kms of highway, 33 rest areas including ferry terminals and campgrounds, as well as five emergency call boxes when completed.

- Budget 2023 approved $75 million in new funding to expand cellular to another 550 kms. This funding is administered by Northern Development Initiative Trust.
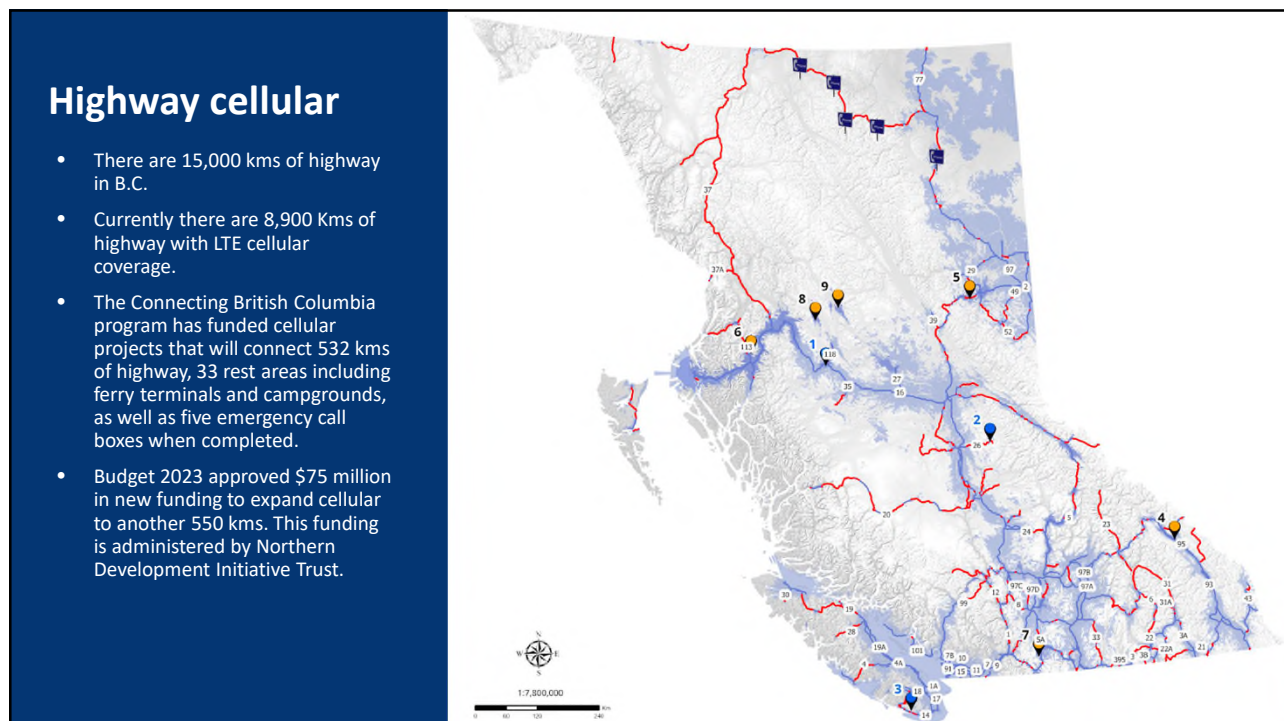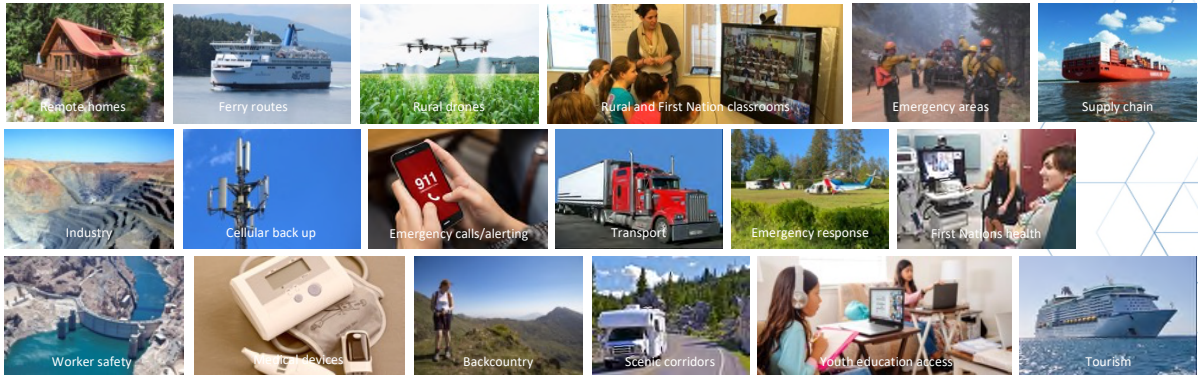

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LEO Constellations – expanding opportunities

LEO internet services are anticipated to provide both fixed and mobile high speed internet services anywhere without last-mile terrestrial infrastructure. They enable digital opportunities where infrastructure doesn't currently exist or is not possible.

Remote homes | Ferry routes | Rural drones | Rural and First Nation classrooms | Emergency areas | Supply chain

Industry | Cellular back up | Emergency calls/alerting | Transport | Emergency response | First Nations health

Worker safety | Mobile devices | Backcountry | Scenic corridors | Youth education access | Tourism

Note: Regulatory approval for mobile use in Canada pending, offered in US since Dec 2022
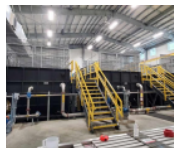
...and more

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Emerging issues

Internet affordability | Infrastructure not enabled | Mobile connectivity | New homes and resettlement | Spectrum utilization | Digital equity

Enabling the right connectivity solution to meet a community's needs requires understanding of community perspectives and priorities.

Connectivity programs provide first step funding for foundational infrastructure that allow communities to realize the benefits of digital access. There is a continuing need to enhance government coordination and programming to meet accelerated community demand once more homes and communities are connected

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Thank you

BRITISH COLUMBIA | Ministry of Citizens' Services

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