



REPORT

To: Electoral Area Directors Committee

Report Number: ADM-EADC-057

From: Corporate Administration

Date: June 13, 2024

Subject: NorthwesTel Residential Fiber Deployment Project in PRRD

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Electoral Area Directors Committee recommend that the Regional Board refer the NorthwesTel Residential Fiber Deployment Project in Peace River District Letter of Support request to the July 17, 2024 Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee meeting for further review and consideration; further, that the Regional Board invite NorthwesTel to present the proposed NorthwesTel last mile project at the July 17, 2024 Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee meeting.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

On May 9, 2024 the Electoral Area Directors Committee passed the following resolution:

MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED,

“That the Electoral Area Directors Committee send a letter to NorthwesTel to request responses to the following questions:

- Whether there will be availability for residents/businesses to connect into the project;*
- Whether any capacity/plans for expansion of the project exist to ensure accessibility for those in remote underserved areas within the PRRD;*
- What the scope of work, benefits and timeline are, and if a detailed map can be provided showing the full extent of the project;*

further, that the information requested be provided for consideration at the June 13, 2024 EADC meeting.”

NorthwesTel was contacted on May 10, 2024 requesting the additional information before the Committee decided on a letter of support. The representative from NorthwestTel provided the attached email response and also offered/requested to meet virtually to discuss the project and answer questions. A formal letter response letter from NorthwesTel was received on May 30, 2024 addressed to Director Hiebert, EADC Chair, and is also attached to this report.

As the urgency to provide a letter of support for a funding application to Connecting Communities BC (CCBC) Provincial grant program is no longer applicable, given that the deadline for current intake was mid-May, it is suggested that the request for support be referred to the Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee where it properly belongs.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

1. That the Electoral Area Directors Committee provide further direction.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:

- Not applicable to Strategic Plan

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

None.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):

None.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

Northwestel noted that the original CCBC deadline for a letter of support is now over, but any official support from the PRRD will be sent to the CCBC and may speed up approvals to allow them to begin survey work in 2024.

Attachments:

1. Letter from Northwestel Re: Letter of Support May 1, 2024
2. Letter from EADC to Northwestel Re: Letter of Support Request May 10, 2024
3. Response from Northwestel Re: Letter of Support Questions May 10, 2024
4. Response from Northwestel Re: Letter of Support Questions May 30, 2024

External Links:

1. [Letter from Northwestel Re: Letter of Support](#)
(May 9, 2024 Electoral Area Directors Committee Agenda, Item 7.1)