

FOR: COUNCIL

MEETING DATE: May 4, 2026

DEPARTMENT: CORPORATE SERVICES

SUBJECT: **PROTECTION ISLAND BROADBAND PROJECT LETTER OF SUPPORT**

**OVERVIEW**

**Purpose of Report**

To provide Council with information relating the letter of support request for the Protection Island Broadband Project.

**Recommendation**

That Council direct Staff to prepare a letter of support for the Mayor's Office to endorse relating to the Protection Island Broadband Project.

**DISCUSSION**

In March 2026, the Protection Island Neighborhood Association (PINA) reached out to the Staff to discuss how to provide Protection Island residents with fibre optic internet connectivity. Their concern is that the existing internet bandwidth is well-below the bandwidth capacity received by the majority of properties in the City.

On 2026-APR-10, Staff, along with MLA Sheila Malcomson and members of PINA, met to discuss getting fibre connectivity to the island. At this meeting MLA Malcomson confirmed provincial support to the Protection Island Broadband Project and that Protection Island would be included in the Connecting Communities BC Program.

The Connecting Communities BC Program is a Canada-British Columbia broadband partnership. Announced March 8, 2022, and in coordination with the Innovation, Science and Economic Development's (ISED) Universal Broadband Fund (UBF), the Connecting Communities BC Program supports a target of connecting 100 per cent of households in BC to high-speed Internet services by 2027.

To move forward, CityWest, a BC-based internet service provider with the support of PINA will apply to the Connecting Communities BC Program (under the authority of the Ministry of Citizen Services) to access funding for the last-mile fibre-to-the-home project. As a prerequisite to be considered for funding, and because Protection Island is part of the City of Nanaimo, CityWest requires a letter of support from the City.

An example of a support letter is provided in Attachment A. The letter needs to be addressed to the Ministry for Citizen Services and show the City's support for CityWest to be included in the Connecting Communities BC Program.

### **COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

This initiative does not require a statutory notification or include community engagement activities.

### **ALIGNMENT WITH CITY PLAN**

This report is aligned with the following City goals:

- An Empowered Nanaimo: Reconciliation, Representation and Inclusion
  - [C4.3 Access For All]
- A Prosperous Nanaimo: Thriving and Resilient Economy
  - [C5.4 Innovation & Technology]

### **ALIGNMENT WITH COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

The report is aligned with the following Council Strategic Framework priorities:

- Implementing City Plan Action Plans and Key City Management Plans

### **NEXT STEPS**

If Council is supportive of this initiative, a letter will be drafted for signature and forwarded to the Ministry of Citizens' Services for inclusion in the Connected Coast program.

### **OPTIONS**

1. That Council direct Staff to prepare a letter of support for the Mayor's Office to endorse relating to the Protection Island Broadband Project.
  - The advantages of this option: Residents of Protection Island will have improved broadband access.
  - The disadvantages of this option: None
  - Financial Implications: None
2. That Council deny the request for a letter of support for the Protection Island Broadband Project.
  - The advantages of this option: None
  - The disadvantages of this option: Residents of Protection Island will not have access to improved broadband services.
  - Financial Implications: None

**KEY MESSAGES**

- The Protection Island Neighborhood Association (PINA) reached out for a letter of support for the provincial application to the Connecting Communities BC Program for improved broadband services.
- As Protection Island is within the boundaries of the City of Nanaimo, a letter of support from the City is needed to support their application to join the Connecting Communities BC Program.

**ATTACHMENTS**

ATTACHMENT A: Example Letter of Support for the Protection Island

**Authored by:**

Laura Mercer  
**General Manager, Corporate Services**

**Concurrence by:**

Kerry Ing  
**Director, Information Technology/CIO**