



September 2021

## FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

The Mayor and Council of the Village of Fraser Lake are making a significant investment in the future of our community. The Village is investing in the installation of Fiber Optic infrastructure throughout the community. We hope to see 100 percent of all residential properties and businesses taking advantage of this opportunity for free internet infrastructure delivered to your property.

This new infrastructure may also be an attractive feature for real estate purposes by increasing property values. New residents choosing to move to Fraser Lake will often look for properties with access to the fiber optic network. By requesting installation of this infrastructure onto your property, you are helping to improve our community and making Fraser Lake a more attractive location for current and future residents. These improvements will have direct social and economic benefits to the overall community.

Small communities are often left out in the cold when it comes to the decisions of large corporations about where to make their investments. Internet services are a perfect example. Although the fiber optic infrastructure runs right through our community along Highway 16, the internet providers have deemed it not profitable enough to branch off the highway and run fiber optic throughout our community. Instead, we are offered copper wire and coaxial internet, television and phone services that are more expensive, significantly slower and provide less bandwidth than what is received in larger centers such as Prince George. As an example, in April 2021, the internet speeds at the Village Office were 15 Mbps download and 2 Mbps upload. The monthly bill was \$150.00. In comparison, a consumer in Prince George would receive roughly 1000 Mbps for both download and upload speed for roughly \$70.00 per month. Our current internet services are inadequate. They are impacting our businesses, our schools, our Medical Clinic, and all our residents accessing the internet.

Internet accessibility is no longer a luxury. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of internet services. Many of our residents attempted to work or study from home. The slow internet speeds and regular disruptions in service caused many frustrations.

Regardless of our repeated requests for better services, we have been ignored.

CityWest is a Crown Corporation owned and operated by the City of Prince Rupert. This Crown Corporation is not driven by profits, or shareholder demands. Although covering costs is a requirement, CityWest is motivated by improving services to the residents of Northwest BC.



CityWest recently completed a major fiber optic infrastructure project called the *Connected Coast Project*. This project has provided CityWest with almost unlimited fiber optic bandwidth capacity. With this new capacity, this social entity is offering the many communities in northwest British Columbia the opportunity to join their network. You may not be familiar with CityWest, but the Village of Fraser Lake will vouch for them. Other communities working with CityWest have had nothing but good things to say about them.

To run fiber optic infrastructure to every home and every business in the Village will cost approximately \$2,090,000.00. To make this possible, the Mayor and Council have authorized an investment of \$1,100,000.00. This is funding that was provided to the Village of Fraser Lake by the Federal and Provincial Governments through the gas tax fund and Covid restart fund. A small remainder of the \$1.1 M will be paid from our infrastructure reserves. None of the initial cost of this infrastructure project is coming from the pockets of taxpayers. However, that assumes you authorize the installation of the fiber optic infrastructure to your home, business, or property during construction.

The fiber optic infrastructure will be installed underground using directional drilling. This will avoid damage to lawns, driveways, or roads. There will be very little disturbance to lawns. But where there is a small disturbance, we will do our best to return the site to its previous state.

If you hesitate, stall, or simply procrastinate in registering for this infrastructure installation until after the construction team has passed your home or business, the cost of returning to install the infrastructure will be significant. For the average home, the cost to the property owner will be approximately \$2,500.00 to \$3,500.00. Please do not hesitate to take advantage of this initially free opportunity.

You may be satisfied with your current internet service. You may not require improved internet or lower rates. That is okay. This initiative is about getting the infrastructure installed throughout the community. A comparable example is natural gas infrastructure. PNG has infrastructure throughout the community. Not everyone is using the service, but it is available. We want the same availability of Fiber Optic service throughout the Village of Fraser Lake.

In 2018 the Federal Government set a standard for internet speeds for all communities in Canada. That standard was 50 Mbps download/10 Mbps upload. Through four different campaigns, the Village of Fraser Lake has been able to demonstrate the service provided to the Village does not meet the Federal Standard. After 489 Internet speed test at 179 different test locations, we have determined our average download speed is



17.7 Mbps. Our average upload speed is 4.35 Mbps. Obviously our 17.7/4.35 Mbps internet speeds are far below the Federal Standard of 50/10 Mbps.

As of September 21, 2021, only about 1/3 of our residents had authorized the installation of the fiber optic infrastructure to their property. We acknowledge this project has arrived with short notice to our residents. Village employees have gone door to door to provide information and to answer questions. We remain available to answer questions or to aid with the authorization procedure. As an incentive, we are offering registrants one of three cash prize draws. To be eligible for any of these cash prizes, you must have registered and authorized the installation of the Fiber Optic infrastructure to your property. The cash draws are \$500.00, \$350.00 or \$150.00. Chamber dollars will be awarded to ensure support for our local economy.

Please go to the CityWest website ([www.citywest.ca](http://www.citywest.ca)) and authorize the installation of fiber optic infrastructure to your home or business before October 1, 2021. You can also contact customer services at CityWest by phone: 1-800-442-8664.

This is not a sales pitch. This is about installing Fiber Optic Infrastructure throughout our community. If in the future you decide to change internet service providers, the Fiber Optic Infrastructure will make it possible to access better services. We also believe having the Fiber Optic infrastructure to your home will increase the value of your property. The installation of fiber optic infrastructure is available to vacant properties as well. Please sign up!

If you have any questions, or require assistance registering, please contact the Village Office at phone: (250) 699-6257.

We can accomplish this together.

The Village of Fraser Lake

**IF YOU WANT FASTER INTERNET, PLEASE GO TO [WWW.CITYWEST.CA](http://WWW.CITYWEST.CA) AND AUTHORIZE THE OPTIC FIBER INSTALLATION TO YOUR HOUSE OR BUSINESS.**