



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**November 5, 2020**

**Driftwood Communications to Develop Internet Connectivity – Last Mile Plan**

qathet Regional District, B.C. – The qathet Regional District (qRD) has selected Driftwood Communications to develop a connectivity plan that will bridge the internet connectivity gap and outline what is needed to pave the last mile within the qRD. This project is supported through grant funding from the Island Coastal Economic Trust, as well as a portion of the qRD’s annual allocation of federal gas tax funds through the Community Works Fund.

Following up on the great work by Joseph McLean of Full Solution Computers conducted in 2009, 2011 and 2016, assessing the current gaps in achieving full internet connectivity for our region, Driftwood is tasked with finding ways and means for addressing these service gaps.

Completion of the Internet Connectivity – Last Mile Plan will be on or before June 30, 2021. Upon completion, the Board will be presented with strategies and costs for bridging the gap that take into consideration the objectives of the [Connected Coast project](#), existing internet services in our region, and nuances specific to the identified service gaps.

The project will focus on finding creative and effective ways to foster public engagement during COVID-19, to ensure the community has a voice in their digital future. Further to this, the qRD will post regular project updates on our website at [qathet.ca](http://qathet.ca) and will be releasing paper and electronic surveys for the public to complete. Driftwood Communications will also be creating a direct email link to gather ideas and input from local residents.

For residents in rural and remote locations, high-speed internet offers greater ability to connect by providing improved access to medical advice, emergency services, educational opportunities, and employment. Improved connectivity infrastructure also affords substantial economic benefits for our region, as the logistical constraints of a regional based business are vastly improved by equal access to high-speed internet. These rural and remote businesses will now be in a position to better compete with their big-city counterparts.

Speaking to Driftwood Communications’ qualifications Chair Brabazon stated, “They have an excellent track record. Based on their work performed for the Strathcona Regional District, we will be well served by their efforts.”

**CONTACT:**

Al Radke, Chief Administrative Officer  
qathet Regional District  
#202-4765 Marine Avenue  
Powell River, BC V8A 2L2  
604-485-2260  
[www.qathet.ca](http://www.qathet.ca)