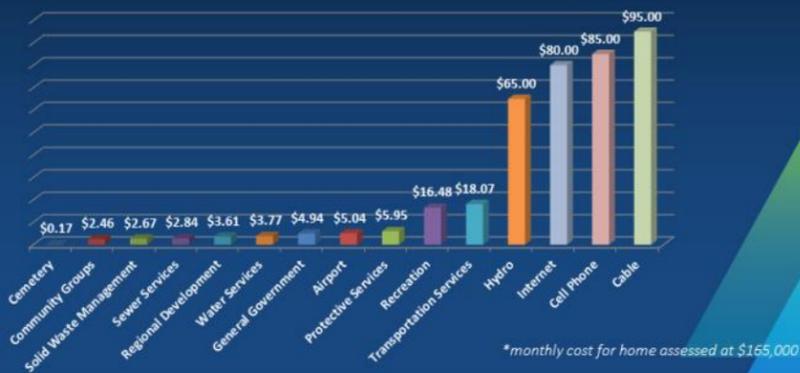


## How much do municipal services cost me compared to my other household expenses?



# From the Bear Pit

## Regional Council Newsletter

March 8, 2021

### Connectivity Improvement at a Standstill

In rural and remote regions such as the Northern Rockies, low population density makes the cost of telecommunications infrastructure per unit of population, too high for a conventional business case. As a result, a single Internet Service Provider (ISP) maintains a de facto monopoly with pricing subject to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunication Commission's (CRTC) tariffed rates.

In response to Regional Council's [January 11, 2021](#) resolution, the NRRM submitted an intervention to [Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2020-367](#), along with submissions from individuals and other organizations to identify issues, inadequacies in telecommunications service and affordability.

To help improve internet access the [Connecting British Columbia](#) program and the [CRTC Broadband Fund](#) help pay for infrastructure to rural and remote areas. NRRM staff discussions with the Ministry of Citizens' Services indicate that the Province is eager to assist the Northern Rockies in this regard, having already approved funding for numerous similar communities including the Peace River Regional District.

Despite being eligible, Northwestel Inc. has informed the NRRM that they will not apply for funding through either program to support the upgrading of broadband service to the minimum standard expected by the CRTC. This leaves the NRRM without any prospect for improved broadband service in the near future.

A letter to is being drafted to the CRTC, Citizen Services, NCLGA and the Minister of Municipal Affairs outlining these concerns [Administration Report No. 11/21](#) • [Broadband Funding Summary](#)

### Passenger Service on the Alaska Highway

In support of a letter that has been submitted by Board of School Trustees Vice-Chair Bill Dolan to Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, Rob Fleming, Regional Council resolved to add their voice with a letter from the NRRM.

The original letter outlines the limited passenger service on the Alaska Highway for residents of Fort Nelson and BC Northeast. The once weekly service provided by Northern Health Bus and BC Bus travels mid-week and is inconvenient, resulting in less frequent uptake.

Mr. Dolan suggests the amalgamation of the two separate services, and having one small/medium size coach making three trips per week between Fort Nelson and Fort St. John/Dawson Creek, that coordinates with Alberta passenger transportation services.

Regularly scheduled passenger bus service on the Alaska Highway has to be considered an essential public transit service for residents of Fort Nelson, the NRRM and the Northeast in general.



### 2021 Preliminary Budget Feedback Invited

Regional Council has been reviewing the 2021 Preliminary NRRM Budget for several weeks. A poorly-attended Virtual Open House was held on March 3, Council and would like to invite the public again to provide their feedback.

This year's budget process includes a couple of options for you to provide your feedback on the budget, taxation and services offered in the community, including providing submissions in writing. If you have any comments you would like to have included in Regional Council's final budget review, please submit your comments in writing to [admin@northernrockies.ca](mailto:admin@northernrockies.ca).

- [View the 2021 Preliminary Budget](#)
- [2021 Budget Summary](#)
- [2021 Special Projects](#)
- [2021 Departmental Operating Summary](#)
- [2021 Capital and Asset Renewal Budget Summary](#)
- [Presentation: 2021 Preliminary Budget \(Feb 19, 2021\)](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

### Ultrasound Services in Fort Nelson

Until recently Fort Nelson received some level of regular ultrasound service, even if only a few days per month at a limited scope of practice.

In a recent [communication through the Northern Health –Fort Nelson & Area Facebook page](#), Northern Health advised that recent cancellations were a result of staffing shortages while a traveling technologist is recruited

The most recent loss has had a significant impact on patients and health care providers alike. An essential service providing critical information to support patient care, Fort Nelson has a right to receive ultrasound services on a consistent basis.

[Regional Council is formally requesting a response](#) from Northern Health, regarding the actions that will be taken to address the sustainability of the service, and increase the scope of ultrasound service available.



Did you know that 911 is now an active service in the Northern Rockies? Find out more at [www.NorthernRockies.ca/911](http://www.NorthernRockies.ca/911)

### Also of note...

- Council received for information correspondence from Rob Fleming Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure regarding air service in Northern BC. [Ministry of Transportation Response 21-Feb-18](#) • [NRRM Letter 21-Jan-19](#)
- Council Information Packages were received for information: [Feb 24](#) • [March 3](#)
- [Recreation Statistics for February 2021](#) were received for information.
- Regional Council resolved to send decommissioned Fire Rescue Engine #3 to Toad River, to serve as a water truck to carry and pump water to assist with structure and brush fires.

