



FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

RESOLUTION #0306.05

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR THE FIRST NATIONS TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL 2006 - 2008 STRATEGIC PLAN

WHEREAS

- A. The First Nations Technology Council (FNTC) was created by First Nations Summit Resolution #0602.12 and mandated to develop a Technology Plan to address issues, including:
- i) high speed internet connection,
 - ii) technology skills development, and
 - iii) development of technical support.
- B. First Nations Summit Resolution #0604.27 recognized telecommunications and supporting technology as basic community capital infrastructure.
- C. Much has been accomplished over the past two years. However, some communities remain un-served or under-served by broadband telecommunications. The FNTC continues to lobby to have all communities with five or more year-round occupied houses connected.
- D. Technical support in communities needs to be addressed and capacity to use technology requires ongoing training.
- E. The FNTC has been working and meeting with stakeholders and partners and has developed a 2006 - 2008 Strategic Plan to address these issues and fulfill its mandate.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

That the First Nations Summit Chiefs in Assembly support:

- a) the attached First Nations Technology Council 2006 - 2008 Strategic Plan, and
- b) the First Nations Technology Council in seeking funds to implement the Strategic Plan, including the convening of a stakeholders meeting in early Spring 2006 to develop an implementation strategy for the Strategic Plan.

MOVED BY: Chief Terry Sampson, Chemainus First Nation
SECONDED BY: Kathryn Teneese, Ktunaxa Kinbasket Treaty Council
DATED: March 9, 2006

Passed by consensus.

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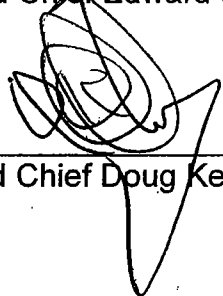
ENDORSED BY:



Dave Porter



Grand Chief Edward John



Grand Chief Doug Kelly



First Nations Technology Council

2006 – 2008 Strategic Plan

*Supporting the Full Integration Of
Information and Communications Technologies
To Improve the Quality Of Life
For All First Nations in British Columbia*

January 2006

Preface

First Nations Technology Council mandate

With guidance from the First Nations Summit Chiefs in Assembly, the First Nations Technology Council serves the 203 First Nations of British Columbia. In setting and pursuing our agenda, FNTC has recognized and is responding to the fact that technology, technology infrastructure, and technology skills capacity development are only the means to an end. Eliminating the Digital Divide in support of productive and sustainable First Nations communities in British Columbia has been, and will remain, the overarching goal for FNTC in all our activities.

FNTC's mandate has been established through a series of resolutions approved by the First Nations Summit. These include:

- First Nations Summit Resolution #0602.12, dated June 14, 2002, which states in part:
"The First Nations Technology Council's mandate is to develop a First Nations Technology Plan for First Nations in British Columbia which will address technology issues, including:
 - 1) *high speed Internet connection;*
 - 2) *technology skills development;*
 - 3) *development of technical support."*
- First Nations Summit Resolution #0604.26, dated June 11, 2004, which states in part:
"The First Nations Summit Chiefs in Assembly hereby expand the mandate of the First Nations Technology Council to include promoting the use of technology as a tool to support the revitalization of culture and language in all First Nation communities in British Columbia."
- First Nations Summit Resolution #0604.27, dated June 11, 2004, which states in part:
"There is a need for First Nation communities to have high speed broadband access to the Internet that includes connecting all administrative offices, schools, health centres, water treatment plants and other community-owned facilities, as well as residences.

This connectivity should be considered as important as other basic infrastructure such as an electrical distribution system, water distribution system or community road."
- First Nations Summit Resolution #1104.12, dated November 25, 2004, which states in part:
"The mandate of the First Nations Technology Council is to develop a Technology Plan for First Nations of British Columbia. In order to develop a Technology Plan that is achievable, secures the support of both levels of government and the private sector, and can be used as a model for other communities in the province, the Council proposes to lead a proof of concept project to be known as the FIT (Fully Integrated Technologies) Community project in a Community Cluster of at least 4 and not more than 8 communities located in the same geographic region. The FNTC would work closely with, and take the lead from, the FIT Community Project Team made up of representatives from the communities included in the Cluster."



Responding to parameters mandated by the First Nations Summit, and in support of our vision statement, *"To promote the use of technology to improve life in First Nations communities,"* the First Nations Technology Council mission has five principal objectives:

- Advocating for First Nations communities on telecommunications and technology issues.
- Building the First Nations Technology Plan.
- Establishing sustainable Information and Communications Technology (ICT) partnerships for First Nations communities.
- Advising the First Nations Summit on technical matters.
- Managing First Nations Technology Council communications.

FNTC strategic vision for technology

The FNTC Strategic Plan started with a Strategic Vision, and has five components, embracing all aspects of ICT capacity development for our communities:

- Every First Nations community will have sufficient broadband capacity, internal network capacity, and equipment for real-time video conferencing for tele-health and other applications including distance education and attendance at virtual conferences.
- Every First Nations community will have qualified technical support available within the community.
- Every First Nations community will have sufficient ICT user-skills training capacity in the community to achieve 100% computer literacy among community members.
- Every First Nations home that wants to be connected will have a broadband connection to the Internet.
- Every First Nations home that wants one will have an up-to-date computer.

FNTC guiding principles for technology

- Broadband connectivity must be identified as basic community infrastructure and cannot be forced into competition for scarce capital dollars in First Nations communities where there could also be a lack of clean water and a lack of adequate housing. First Nations citizens should not be forced to choose between clean water and access to technologies that can bring transformative changes to their communities.
- High-speed broadband service for remote First Nations communities must be better than broadband service in urban centres to offset the lack of local access to critical services, including emergency, family health, advanced educational, and other services.
- The smallest, most isolated First Nations communities must be the first focus for broadband connectivity and community ICT infrastructure deployment programs. The digital divide casts its darkest shadow over these too-easily overlooked communities making it imperative that bridges to the Information Highway be built for people who live in these communities.
- Satellite broadband service does not offer the capacity of high-speed broadband and cannot, for example, fully support two-way video capability necessary for tele-health or distance education, without adequately managed, costly bandwidth. Satellite



broadband is only an interim solution and only for very remote First Nations communities. Satellite broadband should be replaced with fibre or wireless broadband as soon as possible.

- Information and communications technologies can bring transformative changes to every First Nations community. Each community must be the final authority to define their ICT vision, requirements, planning, and implementation timetables.
- ICT infrastructure in First Nations communities, from the community broadband distribution infrastructure to the local area networks and other hardware installations in Band offices and facilities, must be owned by the community. As stated above, broadband connectivity is basic community infrastructure, and basic community infrastructure should not be owned outside the community.
- A critical component for First Nations community sustainability is economic opportunity and job creation in the community. Wherever possible, the ICT infrastructure and user-skills capacity-building, set out in the FNTC Strategic Plan will be done in the community, by community members.
- Supported by the recognition of broadband connectivity as basic community infrastructure and the community as the final authority for ICT planning, First Nations communities must have support for the development of a community technology plan as an integral part of comprehensive community planning.



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Executive Summary

"People lack many things: jobs, shelter, food, health care and drinkable water. Today, being cut off from basic telecommunications services is a hardship almost as acute as these other deprivations, and may indeed reduce the chances of finding remedies to them." - UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan

Background and introduction. The First Nations Technology Council Strategic Plan has been developed in response to the urgent and growing need in the First Nations communities of British Columbia for high-speed broadband connectivity; "last-mile" solutions that distribute the signal to all community buildings; certified community-based technical support for community networks that need to be equivalent to government and industry; and community-based computer and Internet user-skills training, so that every community member can access applications such as tele-health, distance education, e-business and others that can bring transformative change to their lives.

The First Nations Summit Chiefs in Assembly have long recognized that high-speed broadband connectivity is basic community infrastructure no different from electricity, clean water, and community roads. The Transformative Change Accord signed November 25, 2005 between Canada, British Columbia, and BC First Nations leaders again acknowledges this... The First Nations Technology Council (FNTC) has been mandated to develop a First Nations Technology Plan to address First Nations technology issues including access to high-speed broadband service, technical and user skills development, and development of community-based technical support. This Strategic Plan addresses these issues.

The Strategic Plan also addresses related Information and Communications Technology (ICT) issues, without which the transformative changes that technology offers will not be realized. These include the lack of high-quality computers and network infrastructures within Band administration offices and the lack of high-quality computers in community homes and public places for the use of all members of the community. Remote and rural communities must have video conferencing facilities in the communities which, when connected to true broadband service, can provide real-time medical-specialist consultation for community members living in the community, deliver high-school, college-level and trade-skills educational curriculum for community learners, and build strong bridges for community members to family and friends living away from the community or to those who must be sent to hospitals in centres far from the community.

The lack of a "business case" has left many small remote or rural communities without an internet service provider (ISP). The Strategic Plan addresses this through the development of management applications to run a community-based ISP. It addresses the need to have certified ICT technicians in the community and provides them with a support network of senior technicians able to provide advice and solutions for complex technical issues they may be unable to address. The Plan addresses the need for community-based user skills training for users of all ages.

Strategic goals. The First Nations Technology Council's mission is to support "the full integration of information and communication technologies to improve the quality of life for all First Nations in British Columbia." The following goals support the FNTC's mission:

1. Every First Nations community is connected with sufficient broadband to serve all the community's needs;
2. Every First Nations community has sufficient broadband capacity, internal network capacity, and high-speed capacity equipment to provide real-time video conferencing;



3. Every First Nations home has, at minimum, a first-class computer, a printer, and high-capacity broadband Internet service;
4. First Nations administration offices have the broadband Internet connectivity, ICT equipment, and software applications necessary to fully interact with government;
5. Industry-certified A+ and Network+ as the minimum level of qualification for technical support in every First Nations community;
6. Every First Nations community member has the ICT user-skills needed to access relevant applications in support of personal and professional goals and interests.

Program areas. The FNTC Strategic Plan sets out four areas of activity:

- Community connectivity;
- Community ICT deployment;
- ICT technical skills capacity development; and
- ICT user skills capacity development.

In pursuing community connectivity initiatives, FNTC will work collaboratively with established public and private-sector projects mandated to bring broadband connectivity to BC First Nations and to distribute the connectivity within the communities. The latter three areas of activity will see FNTC, supported by First Nations partner organizations, taking a direct role in planning and implementing the projects identified in each area of activity.

Community Connectivity

The first and most costly area of activity is community connectivity. FNTC continues to work with both the federal and provincial governments to establish high-speed broadband access to every First Nations community and to distribute broadband service through every community. In particular, FNTC is working with NetworkBC (Provincial Ministry of Labour and Citizen Services) to complete the broadband connections committed by the Province firstly in the April 2005 Connecting Communities announcement and more recently in the September 2005 Provincial Budget. These two commitments will see broadband points-of-presence installed in 203 First Nations communities by the end of 2008. With government support, FNTC expects that community networks will also be installed in every community by the end of 2008.

In conjunction with the delivery of broadband services to communities, FNTC recognizes the importance of engaging each First Nations community and assisting the community to develop and document a community technology plan that will serve as a blueprint for current and future ICT development and utilization in the community. Some communities will require help in establishing their community-based Internet service provider and in setting up their video-conferencing facilities, including specialized training for local technicians. Transformative changes to health and education require that people with medical or special support needs and learners of all ages have access to first-class computers

As discussed above, FNTC will not take a direct role in managing community connectivity projects. However, in the process of developing the Strategic Plan, FNTC produced various internal reports that taken together give an estimate of \$34 million to complete the projects defined in the Community Connectivity section of the Strategic Plan.

Community ICT Deployment

First Nations Band Administration must have secure, server-managed local-area networks being professionally installed that will be easily maintained by the community's technical support person. In addition, each community should have a public-access telecentre. FNTC will



support the development of software applications that can be shared among BC communities with the goal of better managing community data, improving accountability, and reducing the report burden that all First Nations communities face.

FNTC has budgeted \$11.9 million to complete planned community ICT deployment projects.

ICT Technical Skills Capacity Development

It is imperative that First Nations communities have certified community-based technical support to keep the community's computers and networks operational and upgraded to current technical standards. The Strategic Plan identifies two important initiatives to provide community-based technical support for BC First Nations. The first is a technical-skills training program to be undertaken in a partnership between FNTC and the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) that could be expanded to include other post-secondary institutions. Within the timeframe of the Strategic Plan, this program is targeted to train 230 First Nations community technicians to A+ and Network+ industry certification standards in an intensive 13-week program of blended classroom and web-based instruction as developed by NVIT, followed by a hands-on practicum.

To provide an important layer of support for First Nations community-based technicians, within the Strategic Plan, FNTC will launch a First Nations Technical Support Network. In its early stages, the Technical Support Network will be a virtual organization. Senior and junior technicians, working in and for First Nations communities, will be able to connect to exchange information and provide advice on technical support problems and new ICT deployments that can challenge even an experienced technician.

FNTC has budgeted \$3.8 million to complete planned ICT technical skills capacity development projects.

ICT User Skills Capacity Development

The final area of activity within the FNTC Strategic Plan is ICT user skills capacity development: basic and advanced computer and Internet user skills training in the community for all First Nations community members. Initially this training will be principally delivered by mobile training labs brought to the communities by teams of skilled trainers. Visits by the mobile training labs will be coordinated between an authorized community representative and the Plan administration team.

To create a community-based training capacity, a train-the-trainer program will be undertaken in conjunction with one or more First Nations education centres in the province. Community members nominated by their communities will receive one week of intensive instruction on training techniques for basic and intermediate software applications.

To create public recognition for the user-skills being acquired by First Nations community members through the training programs being developed and implemented as part of the Strategic Plan, FNTC will develop and implement a program of user-skills competency testing and certification. This will be a multi-pronged program in which community members having taken user-skills training will have an opportunity to earn a standards-based competency certificate. In conjunction with the training and testing, FNTC will undertake an awareness-building campaign within government and within the private sector in the province that First Nations user-skills competency certificates can be relied upon by educators, prospective employers, and others as evidence that the certificate holder has demonstrated ICT user-skill competencies consistent with the level of certification.

FNTC has budgeted \$4.9 million to complete planned ICT user skills capacity development projects.

