

Short Description

Statement of strategic support for broadband as a driver of economic development.

Objectives

- Prioritize broadband as a strategic resource for the development of the local economy
- Highlight the importance of digital communications in service delivery to citizens across all sectors of life, including healthcare, education and public safety
- Reinforce these principles in the long range planning documents that municipalities generate, particularly general, area and specific plans, CIP planning documents and EIR documents for public improvements.

Background

Ensuring access to broadband will be the defining factor in whether or not a community will be able to deliver emergency services and healthcare, prepare its students for the careers of tomorrow and support the development of living wage jobs.

To build our local economy, we need better infrastructure, particularly faster and cheaper broadband access for businesses, institutions and residents. It will require a coordinated and sustained cooperation between public and private partners to help develop these resources in costs effective and efficient ways and a reframing of the way in which local governments think about communications infrastructure.

While connected economically to the Silicon Valley, the Central Coast is, in many ways, a model of the economic inequality that faces communities without robust and redundant connections to broadband infrastructure. Huge swaths of our tri-county region feature a challenging topography of coastline, mountains, and farmland which are not well served by current providers, and there is a significant amount of area where no service is available at all. The patchwork of local and state regulations and rural / suburban orientation of our communities has limited investment by private providers.

After the boom (and bust) of fiber builds in the 1990s and early 2000s, telecommunications providers have focused on wireless services to capture revenue from the explosion of mobile telephony, at the expense of further investments or upgrades to existing local fiber loops.

According to the OECD Communications Outlook (published biannually), telecoms capital expenditures peaked in early 2000 and has started to declining. One paper commissioned by Federal Communications Commission in 2009 authored by Robert C. Atkinson & Ivy E. Schultz estimated that capital expenditures have dropped from \$59 to \$51 billion between 2008-2009.

Faced with these economic realities, and facing significant pressure to create stable regional employment in a variety of industries, it is incumbent upon local jurisdictions to do everything in their power to lower the barriers to entry for the deployment of additional broadband resources.

Discussion

One of the most consistent problems in the regional economy has been the need to develop employment in a number of disciplines, from research and development and information technology to smart manufacturing, supply chain management and sourcing and hospitality. Access to broadband is extremely limited and large swaths of southern Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties, and nearly all of San Benito County, are severely underserved, which has

negative consequences for businesses hoping to locate or expand regionally. This in turn is reflected in the region's labor market, which has struggled throughout the "great recession" which began in 2008.

One way to combat these trends is to use the long term planning skills of public sector agencies in encouraging and prioritizing the development of broadband resources on the Central Coast.

As an economic development engine, broadband can help sustain and expand the region's businesses so that they can reach global markets, actualize cost savings by government agencies, improve public safety communications, provide health and medical services at lower costs, offer workforce development to unemployed and underemployed residents to learn new job skills, and prepare local youth with the technology skills essential for their future for a very limited investment of public sector dollars and administrative overhead.

A number of communities nationwide have made prioritizing the deployment of additional broadband resources as part of their ongoing economic development strategy. Kansas City, Kansas worked with Google to develop a community fiber network as part of the Google "Fiber for Communities," pilot project. Burbank, Pasadena Palo Alto and Santa Clara County have been leaders in developing municipal fiber networks and economic development policies that prioritize access to network resources. These communities' efforts have helped stabilize local labor and real estate markets as well as municipal finances.

By taking concrete steps to lower the administrative hurdles for further development of internet infrastructure, **[Name of Community]** hopes to encourage additional private sector investment, which will, in turn help deliver better services to our citizens.

One of the simplest steps within the span of control of the municipality is the insertion of language encouraging broadband adoption into future planning documents, as well as directing public works and utility service workers to plan for and include broadband infrastructure in future street excavations as well as develop better maps, coordination tools and noticing systems to encourage competition and open access to the public right of way.

The Central Coast Broadband Consortium, a regional planning and policy group funded in part by the California Advanced Services Fund is in the process of building a publicly accessible development platform that aggregates information on existing infrastructure and market demand. Members of the group, which has been active for more than a decade, have contributed public works, GIS and policy expertise in order to develop a mapping and planning interface that can be used by carriers, companies and municipalities to ease the barriers to entry for broadband infrastructure development. The region will have access to this resource beginning in 2014.

Fiscal Impact

Depending on the suite of policies and programs adopted the financial implications of this directive are somewhat flexible. At a minimum, this change is more conceptual and strategic rather than operational. While additional analysis and effort will have to be taken in future planning efforts as well as capital improvement planning, there are no fixed costs associated with those efforts. This being said, the opportunity cost of not supporting, evaluating and investing in the infrastructure that is the backbone of the national economy is significant.

Get Connected Resolution

[Name of Local Government]

Get Connected!

Declaration of Support for Get Connected! and a Call to Action

WHEREAS, closing the Digital Divide is vital to the economic prosperity and quality of life for residents in [Name of Local Government] and throughout California.

WHEREAS, [Name of Local Government] finds and declares that high-speed Internet access referred to generically as “broadband” and including both wireline and wireless technologies is essential 21st Century infrastructure in a digital world and global economy.

WHEREAS, [Name of Local Government] recognizes that California is home to a wellspring of innovation that has given rise to the evolution of broadband and other information technologies, however Californians’ adoption and use of broadband technology is only approximately equivalent to the national average.

WHEREAS, [Name of Local Government] acknowledges that 38% of all Californians, 40% of low-income households, and [percentage of residents in local jurisdiction or region] are not connected to the Internet with broadband, leaving more than 14 million Californians without high-speed Internet access at home.

WHEREAS, [Name of Local Government] is committed to helping families and children be healthy, productive and self-sufficient and realizes that the use of broadband can save both time and money for residents while helping them bridge the economic divide.

WHEREAS, [Name of Local Government] is committed to helping students obtain the highest-quality education possible incorporating digital literacy and understands that high-speed Internet connectivity and the availability of computing devices both at school and at home are critical teaching and learning tools for academic achievement.

WHEREAS, [Name of Local Government] is committed to reducing its carbon footprint and recognizes that broadband is a strategic “green” technology that decreases greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on foreign oil by enabling e-government and the provision of more services online.

WHEREAS, [Name of Local Government] is committed to Digital Inclusion and increasing citizen participation in the public process through expanded engagement using broadband.

WHEREAS, [Name of Local Government] recognizes that it has the opportunity to impact broadband deployment and adoption in its several local government roles and responsibilities, including as a policy leader, planning body, land use approval agency, purchaser-consumer of communications equipment and information technology, and a service provider.

WHEREAS, [Name of Local Government] welcomes the opportunity to partner with the California Emerging Technology Fund along with the Governor, Legislature, other local governments, civic leaders, community organizations, employers, labor representatives, educators, and policymakers to encourage adoption of broadband technology.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that [Name of Local Government] hereby

joins with the California Emerging Technology Fund in launching and promoting Get Connected! —a public awareness program to close the Digital Divide—and declares 2009 and 2010 as target years for all residents, businesses and community organizations to Get Connected!

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the [Name of Local Government] [Board of Supervisors or City Council] requests all of their departments and agencies to review scopes of responsibilities, work plans, and services to identify and report back to the [Board of Supervisors or City Council] within six (6) months on the strategic actions that will remove barriers to and promote the deployment and adoption of broadband among residents, customers, and recipients of public services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the [Name of Local Government] [Board of Supervisors or City Council] directs that appropriate policies promoting and supporting the deployment and adoption of broadband be promulgated and incorporated into the General Plan and other appropriate land use and economic development plans.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the [Name of Local Government] [Board of Supervisors or City Council] directs the [County Administrative Officer or City Manager] and other appropriate departments to determine how to optimize the use of broadband technology to inform and engage residents to increase citizen participation in the public processes of governance and expand Digital Inclusion.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the [Name of Local Government] [Board of Supervisors or City Council] will seek to cooperate and share the results of Get Connected! with neighboring jurisdictions and other public agencies and shall post this resolution on the [county or city] website and send a copy to the [regional Council of Governments] for appropriate distribution to other local governments.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the [Name of Local Government] [Board of Supervisors or City Council] authorize the use of their names as champions of Get Connected! On the websites of the California Emerging Technology Fund (www.CETFund.org and www.GetConnectedToday.com) and in printed materials pertaining to Get Connected!

APPROVED AND ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2010.

California Emerging Technology Fund
Sample Resolution for Local Governments