



Santa Barbara County | Broadband Strategy

Objective

The Broadband Consortium of the Pacific Coast (BCPC) will coordinate with REACH and the Northern Santa Barbara County EconAlliance, local jurisdictions, and other key stakeholders and bring together higher education institutions and telecom providers to develop a long-term strategic plan for broadband deployment throughout Santa Barbara County and then the tri-county region. The Consortium will work as the project manager to ensure that the development of the strategic plan will achieve the following:

- A plan for the design of broadband infrastructure that results in regional middle mile networks to interconnect our local cities, increase capacity, increase disaster preparedness, and encourage industry competition
- Utilize collaborative strategies to ensure digital inclusion and aligns with Broadband for All California Initiative
- Ensure a Smart City vision for the future which requires technological innovation.

Problem

As a region, our communities lack reliable connectivity to the internet to work and learn efficiently and effectively. While some areas of Santa Barbara County are well connected, including government and higher education, our businesses and our families have been affected by a lack of capacity, connection, at an affordable cost. We need to work to ensure final mile connectivity for our communities, including our schools, healthcare providers and our families.

Lack of broadband infrastructure makes it difficult for the Central Coast to compete for and attract companies. While expansion may take place over time, the region has historically not kept pace with evolving technology or service infrastructure.

Outcome

A comprehensive Santa Barbara Strategic Plan to be used as a guiding document and planning tool that will lead to increased fiber capacity throughout the county and connection to neighboring counties. Jurisdictions within the County can use the strategy to apply for infrastructure funding at the State and Federal levels. Significant funding is anticipated from both the state and federal levels of government and a plan will be required to apply for funding. This strategy will provide the region with a “shovel ready” approach that aligns areas of needs, with both public and private interests to create a regional response that will maximize the collaborative potential of the stakeholders involved.

Throughout the process, the Consortium will work to ensure that there is ownership of the shared strategies by Santa Barbara County partners and stakeholders. The outcome will result in the building of infrastructure to create accessibility and the development of future of Smart Cities.

Short term tactics

- REACH assisted GoBiz with deployment of broadband survey to all municipalities and key private sector leadership and education – COMPLETED and waiting for results
- Convene stakeholders to create an awareness of the imperative to establish broadband as the 4th utility and deliver Internet 4 all. This requires the development of municipal stakeholder strategies integrated at the regional level.
- Assess existing levels of service throughout the region and identify areas of greatest need.
- Create an asset inventory of existing broadband assets and right of ways. Specifically, establish a GIS platform that can serve as a unique regional collaborative information sharing tool helpful to the development of initiatives based on gaps identified, areas requiring service, existing assets, and resources available.
- Convene a regional stakeholder group to inform review and advise existing initiatives and recommend initiatives to close the gaps – specifically in consideration of current initiatives and anticipated funding.
- Identify and support jurisdictions to get projects to shovel ready status
- Partner with local and state leadership to secure funding and investment

Ongoing tactics

- Work with task force and stakeholders that will result in a middle-mile regional network that interconnects municipalities and establishes communications resiliency and redundancy while providing access and capacity for the last mile private sector providers.

- Advocate and work towards the establishment of community networks to connect the anchor institutions to all municipalities.
- Develop collaborative partnerships for digital inclusion to close the digital divide.
- Work with grant writers to assist in securing funding and investment as needed for deployment of initiatives identified in the strategic plan
- Work with regional partners on governance strategy

Initial Investment Requirements

75% Public Sector; 25% Private Sector

≈ \$300,000

Grant funding from the following would offset need for long-term public-sector investment and increase ROI for the public partners:

- | | |
|--------|--------|
| • RCRC | • USDA |
| • RDOF | • ARPA |
| • CASF | • NTIA |

Other jurisdictions will be approached for funding support based on any broadband planning work completed.

Strategic Partners & Roles

All the partners are important to the development and deployment of a strategic plan. These key stakeholders help scope and shape the strategy and can sign on as applicants for grants or other funding opportunities.

The **Broadband Consortium of the Pacific Coast (BCPC)** has as its primary purpose the expansion and improvement of broadband deployment, access, and adoption through the development of collaborative, stakeholder-driven regional strategies throughout the central coastal region of California

Public Sector Jurisdictions are essential to the planning and deployment of broadband and specifically for adopting policies that support broadband installation, example would be a 'dig once' policy in coordination with all the jurisdictions. Policy check list attached.

Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GoBiz) has been tasked to regularly convene private-sector companies to understand and predict current and future demand for broadband. This important role is to help ensure that the proper allocation of resources and manage policies and programs that support broadband goals and initiatives that will support economic development and community wellbeing.

Anchor institutions are large organizations that tend to have access to build or connect reliably to broadband. Examples of these institutions are universities, medical centers, government entities and school districts. anchor institutions can be considered as part of the 'middle mile' and host jumping off points to serve the surrounding community. The role of the anchor institutions in the Central Coast region would play a critical role in broadband deployment in the Central Coast region. Representatives from institutions would need to participate in a regional stakeholder group.

North Santa Barbara County Chumash Tribe plays a very important role in broadband deployment in the region. Their ability to assist in the connection of infrastructure between Northern Santa Barbara County and Southern San Luis Obispo County opens opportunity for the surrounding jurisdictions.

Other partners, including Economic Development organizations and local experts have a significant role in broadband deployment. More specifically, they tend to understand the needs of the business community and hold the ear of the private sector. The private sector can voice need and demand in real time with real problems as well as real strategies and solutions.

Scope and Project Deliverables

The consortium proposes that the scope of the project include the following:

1. Broadband Analysis
 - a. Collateralize already developed studies with the help of partners and consultant to determine preferred scenarios, update data, create an educational packet of information of where we are and how to reach and align with the California for All Broadband Action Plan
 - b. Aggregate SB County assets and include anchor institutions, municipal, state, federal right of ways, and all other applicable assets to be determined as a beneficial resource for broadband deployment.
 - c. Identify gaps in local governmental policies -ordinances, general plans etc and recommend adoptable policies to support the streamlining, expediting and accelerating the deployment of broadband infrastructure.
 - d. Identify and tier top priorities for deployment within the county that will result in increased speeds and equitable access while keeping in mind future technology considerations until fiber can be installed in the ground for redundancy and resiliency.
 - e. Identify and aggregate potential State/Federal funding for deployment investment for use by a public entity and same for private organization or business.

- f. Address if and how the potential for a public/private partnership would benefit the County and the region.
- 2. Community Outreach
 - a. Host public forums that include businesses, education, the general public to assess digital equity.
 - b. Public outreach that includes the above and jurisdictions for speed test data
- 3. ISP Outreach
 - a. Work with ISP's to identify successes and hardships in deployment including permitting and process hindrances; help identify and create documentation of benefit for retaining their services in the County
 - b. Work to create the benefit for expanding ISP services to expand the middle mile for existing providers to leverage for business growth and opportunity for others ISP's to invest in the County and the Region
- 4. Future Planning
 - a. Consideration for the future
 - i. Cost estimate to deliver connectivity under the following scenarios
 - 1. Municipal networks
 - 2. Public/Private Partnership Model
 - 3. Connecting to underserved Residents
- 5. Economic Impacts
 - a. The BCPC will work to collate the economic analysis of the direct and indirect employment creation through existing economic development models to quantify potential economic impacts of broadband deployment. The job analysis should also address job-quality metrics, such as prevailing wages and other relevant labor standards.
 - b. This portion of the work product would be completed under a tri-county proposal and may come back to the board for consideration.
- 6. Deliverables
 - a. A Santa Barbara County Broadband Strategy in DRAFT for review and comment.
 - b. A FINAL Broadband Strategy to be utilized by the County and participating jurisdictions in hard copy and digital files
 - c. Presentation will be developed and delivered with relevant materials for the Board of Supervisors and any participating jurisdictions.