



# BROADBAND

## Overview

Broadband is essential to providing economic opportunities throughout the Mid-Columbia region. The region's rural nature and challenging and diverse terrain make building broadband infrastructure extremely costly and nearly impossible for private sector investment alone to meet needs. Enhancing broadband capacity for the region will enhance economic opportunities and support more resilient and networked communities. In addition:

- Improving broadband connection in the region means several things. Building **redundancy** that connects east/west and north/south enables more reliable broadband connections throughout the region in the event of an outage, cable-cut, or natural disaster. This redundancy is a necessary condition for businesses interested in locating or growing in the region. **Increasing speeds** and **decreasing latency** in connections means that they can better support industry growth in the technology sector as well as others, improve telemedicine and distance learning capabilities, and provide more robust use of many other applications for businesses and communities.
- Reaching **key tower sites and facilities** increases service for public safety communications as well as opportunities for private internet and cellular carriers to build upon the backbone investment for additional connectivity;
- **Addressing un/under-served areas** will increase internet access at homes, businesses, and key community anchor institutions.
- Increasing broadband throughout the region means additional **homes** become viable choices for residents that require internet access for their work or businesses at their residences, relieving some housing pressures with adequate broadband access currently.
- Enhanced broadband provides **connection to education and training** opportunities for the growth of a skilled and talented workforce.

The strategy to address broadband falls into three primary areas: Access, Awareness, and Adoption.

## Infrastructure: Broadband Action Plan

	Partners	Timeline
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<b>4.10 Strategy:</b> Support coordination between local governments in the five county region and internet service providers.		
4.16.1 Convene and facilitate bi-annual Columbia Gorge Broadband Consortium meetings.	MCEDD	Bi-annual
4.16.2 Support County broadband planning groups and conversations to leverage federal and state investment.	MCEDD, Counties, ISPs	Short-long term
<b>4.11 Strategy:</b> Increase publically available broadband access points and their use. Maintain an inventory of sites.	Broadband Consortium, community groups	Mid-term
<b>4.12 Strategy:</b> Support Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in addressing middle and last mile telecommunications infrastructure gaps		
4.18.1 Further develop relationships with and engage ISPs to discuss gaps in services throughout the region. Assist identification of demand in under and unserved communities.	Gorge Broadband Consortium and partners	Ongoing
4.18.2 Reach key tower sites/facilities. Identify and map sites.	Gorge Broadband Consortium, counties, States and partners	Map: Immediate, Reach: Long term
4.18.3 Connect directly with private internet and cellular carriers to build upon existing backbone investments. Leverage public investments (eg 911 cell tower infrastructure in Klickitat County) to support expansion of service.	Gorge Broadband Consortium, ISPs, counties and partners	Connect: immediate Leverage: mid term
4.18.4 Work with ISPs to support improving available speeds and reduce latency in the network to support business development in the tech sector and other industries where applicable.	Gorge Broadband Consortium, ISPs and partners	Long term
<b>4.13 Strategy:</b> Support investments into a fully redundant network.		
<b>4.13.1</b> Build redundancy connecting east-west and north-south for a more reliable system in the event of an outage, cable-cut or natural disaster.	ISPs, Gorge Broadband Consortium and partners	Long term
4.13.2 Address wireless deadzones, in partnership with internet and cellular providers	Cell providers, counties, Gorge Broadband Consortium	Long term
4.19.3 Encourage backup power for key sites.	Gorge Broadband Consortium, utilities,	Mid-term

	county ec dev	
<b>4.14 Strategy:</b> Advocate for and pursue funding through federal and state funding programs.		
4.14.1 Maintain the funding resource guide through the Gorge Consortium.	MCEDD, State broadband office	Immediate, ongoing
4.20.2 Support continued and increased funding into currently over-subscribed USDA programs, including Community Connect, Distance Learning and Telemedicine grant programs and the Rural Broadband Loan program. Identify projects to utilize FCC e-Rate and Healthcare Connect funding.	Gorge Broadband Consortium and partners	Current legislative session
4.20.3 Increase state funding into targeted middle-mile build out. Support development of state incentive programs to match federal and private resources.	MCEDD, NCRST, Gorge Broadband Consortium and partners	Current legislative session
4.20.4 Work with local policy makers to develop a plan for providing business incentives for paying into tech/broadband improvements.	TBD	Long term
<b>4.21 Strategy:</b> Address barriers to efficient broadband expansion.		
4.21.1 Create a resource guide for, and identify opportunities to implement, “Dig Once” policies. Engage local planning entities, local and transmission focused power companies, wireless tower owners, water infrastructure providers, transportation entities, to better understand their policies around utility siting and sharing infrastructure/trenches.	Gorge Broadband Consortium and partners	Mid-term
4.21.2 Support streamlined permitting for broadband projects.	Gorge Broadband Consortium, counties, cities, states, ISPs, utilities and partners	Mid-term
4.21.3 Support incorporation of broadband into local plan updates as appropriate.	Gorge Broadband Consortium, counties, cities	Ongoing
<b>4.22 Strategy:</b> Increase adoption and use of existing broadband infrastructure.		
4.22.1 Maintain and use mobile laptop learning lab. Transform to mobile device learning lab. Encourage additional use of other existing regional resources for tech training.	MCEDD, foundations, Broadband Consortium, Industry Alliances	Mid-term
4.22.2 Offer business technology trainings and forums.	MCEDD, SBDC, Industry	Mid-Term

	Alliances	
4.22.3 Offer trainings and forums focused on community technology literacy.	Broadband Consortium, County Ec Dev, Foundations	Short term
<b>4.23 Strategy:</b> Improve awareness and promote available broadband infrastructure necessary for business success.		
4.23.1 Continue to host regional website to promote the available broadband options in our five counties (gorgebroadband.org).	Gorge Broadband Consortium and partners	Ongoing
4.23.2 Gather and disseminate information on broadband in meetings with ISPs, local government entities and economic development professionals.	Gorge Broadband Consortium and partners	Bi-annual
4.23.3 Host Oregon Connections Telecommunications Conference.	State, MCEDD, Industry Sponsors	Annual





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