



Broadband Adoption & Utilization Strategic Plan

2016

April 6, 2016

By Condon City Council

PO Box 445 -:- 128 S. Main Street -:- Condon -:- Oregon 97823

BROADBAND VISION STATEMENT

Our strategic plan is for the City of Condon to leverage current regional technology planning efforts in broadband infrastructure and City investment in middle-mile fiber to enhance our city's economic vitality and quality of life through public and private partnerships.

CONDON'S BROADBAND STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Increase availability and awareness of high quality broadband services throughout Condon by driving demand through education and public outreach.
2. Close the digital divide in our community: Take actions towards universal digital literacy and access to affordable, robust broadband connections.
3. Improve to education and health outcomes by leveraging on-line opportunities.
4. Increase the number of new businesses entering the city and retain existing businesses through expansion of a technically fluent workforce.
- 5.

OVERVIEW

"Like electricity a century ago, broadband is a foundation for economic growth, job creation, global competitiveness and a better way of life. It is enabling entire new industries and unlocking vast new possibilities for existing ones. It is changing how we educate children, deliver health care, manage energy, ensure public safety, engage government, and access, organize and disseminate knowledge."

--The Federal Communications Commission released America's Plan

In November 2015 the City of Condon Council appointed a "Fiber Committee" to investigate providing broadband capabilities within the City. The Committee forged forward with the goal of providing fast, affordable and reliable broadband that would be available to every resident and business.

Broadband has transformed the ability to communicate, participate, create, educate, inform, drive economic and community development and has become as essential as telephone and electricity.

It is the function of government to provide essential services within a community. In 2015 the Federal Communications Commission elevated broadband to an essential service, now on par with electricity, sewer and water. A July 28, 2015 map of the State of Oregon shows that Gilliam, Sherman and Wheeler counties are the only three counties in the state where residents are unable to subscribe to 25 megabytes of service. This inhibits the ability to perform even basic business, education and health related tasks within our community. The City of Condon is committed to providing strong leadership and an eager customer base in working to create a successful public/private partnership to that end.

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The strategic broadband plan was completed with input from Condon city councilors, local business representatives, the regional schools Superintendent, health services leaders to develop the following

goals and strategies to obtain goals. Due to the small size of Condon several individuals have ties to more than one of the groups that participated – teacher is also an EMT, etc.

Goal #1 - Increase availability and awareness of high quality broadband services throughout Condon by driving demand through education and public input

Our Priority Action Agenda

1. **Explore partnerships with public or private entities to assist with the fiber middle mile to make broadband affordable and accessible.** Leverage other funds to assist with construction of middle-mile to control costs to service providers and ultimately customers.
2. **Drive demand for service through education and marketing the impacts and benefits of broadband.** Education is key to ‘unlocking’ latent demand for service, that would help make the business case for extending more capacity and services throughout the city.
3. **Explore partnerships to focus on demand activation and last mile accessibility.** Leverage other infrastructure, such as fiber assets owned by local power companies, telecommunications carriers, and local, state and federal government, to reduce cost of deployment through smart partnering and incentives.
4. **Explore all possibilities for leveraging existing public and private infrastructure to bridge rural last mile gaps.** The rural access problem is not limited to the City of Condon but exists in most rural areas of Oregon and in many rural areas across the nation.

Our Implementation Strategy

- Encourage competition to provide affordable, fast broadband service through private or governmental internet service providers with no bandwidth limitations imposed on any content provider.
- Drive ‘high capacity utilization’ by businesses through education about web conferencing, video sharing, use of social media and other ‘power’ uses of the internet for marketing and business development.
- Share fiber/broadband survey results with public and private entities that may provide broadband.
- Work with public and private resources to obtain funds to assure a “buy-in” on middle mile for the lowest possible cost.
- Form a cooperative effort to drive marketing and education on a public-private partnership basis to encourage adoption of broadband throughout the region.

Long Term Strategies

- Advocate for local policies or programs which extend rural broadband service to South Gilliam County residents.
- Partnership or pilot project with Oregon Public Broadcasting, Oregon Broadband Advisory Committee and Oregon **Broadband DD** to demonstrate a rural broadband project.

Goal #2 - Close the digital divide in our community: Take actions towards universal digital literacy and access to affordable, robust broadband connections

Our Priority Action Items

- **Develop and promote a policy for access to broadband in Condon and surrounding areas.** Establish a “broadband access for all” principle, which will guide policy and determine actions that might provide both affordability programs and initiatives to incentivize or subsidize development of rural broadband infrastructure.
- **Deploy an effective public awareness and outreach campaign that articulates broadband benefits and value proposition.** This outreach can draw on many sources for content, including the library system, OSU Extension Service, local government, Condon School District and Small Business Development Center (SBDC).
- **Establish partnerships to provide digital literacy training. Develop a community based Technology Users Group with the mission of helping others, “neighbor-to-neighbor”, with broadband/technology utilization skills.** Develop agreements with service providers, computer support service providers, coffee shops, Library, chamber and others to distribute the outreach materials. These materials should include specific information (how to set a password, how to check e-mail, how to use a browser, how to set up tablet or smart phone). Develop skills centers within libraries, computer labs at schools, “after school” programs, and at other locations to offer access to devices and support for use of broadband technologies.

Our Implementation Strategy

- Bring potential funding partners together for the development of a broadband adoption partnership to help implement recommendations in a public space such as the Gilliam County Public Library where residents can “test drive” high speed broadband.
- Enhance the Gilliam County Public Library’ and Condon School District’s digital literacy program capabilities by seeking funding resources and exploring new partnerships for building technology enrichment.
- Using recommendations of civic and education partners, explore the feasibility of an expanded City hosted, whether public or private sector provided. Wi-Fi network availability through public hotspots or community use facilities.

Long Term Strategies

- Stay current with future developments in broadband technology.
- Improve cellular service through future technology including 5G cellular technology.

Goal #3 - Improve health and education outcomes by leveraging telehealth and online learning.

Broadband is ushering in new modalities of education and health services. Health care services including vital signs, medication management, and face-to-face consultations between patients and doctors will be possible over a broadband link. Seniors won’t have to travel to a doctor’s office to be monitored. Consultations with major medical centers in other cities will be possible without having to leave Condon. On the education front, students will be able to take courses from educational

institutions anywhere in the world over broadband. Virtual schools are developing and educating students today in Oregon, and throughout the country. Distance education is a significant part of the state's 40-40-20' educational goals and Oregon State University wants to provide on-line courses in partnership with their Extension offices and have a state-wide campus. Schools need at least one gig of service to provide the bandwidth for programs and distance learning.

Our Priority Action Items

1. **Establish a policy to get broadband access to every address to support healthcare service delivery.** Work with the State, health care providers, insurers and others to actively promote service delivery via broadband.
2. **Establish a public/private consortium for collaboration and sharing best practices across the healthcare sectors.** Involve health care providers and state agencies to work together to address the policy/protocol issues holding back service delivery over broadband. These issues include federal privacy standards, lack of affordable broadband services and user devices, and lack of organizational skills and programs to offer on-line services.
3. **Initiate a pilot program to test assumptions and develop best practices for using broadband to improve healthcare outcomes.** Establish a cross-sector pilot project to demonstrate the education benefits of broadband adoption and to advance demand for these services within the city.
4. **Establish a policy to get broadband access to every address to support education service delivery.** Work with the state, health care providers, insurers and others to actively promote service delivery via broadband.
5. **Establish public/private consortium for collaboration and sharing best practices across the education sectors.** Involve educational institutions and state agencies to work together to address the policy/protocol issues holding back service delivery over broadband. These issues include lack of affordable broadband services and user devices and lack of programs to offer on-line services.
6. **Initiate a pilot program to test assumptions and develop best practices for using broadband to improve educational outcomes.** Establish a cross-sector pilot project to demonstrate the education benefits of broadband adoption and to advance demand for these services in the city.

Our Implementation Strategy:

- Involve South Gilliam County Health Clinic, Oregon Health Network, Mid-Columbia Medical Center, Gilliam County and other service organizations in framing a city-wide access policy to insure service is available and affordable to all homes, businesses and schools.
- Convene Information Technology professionals from all of the agencies mentioned above, as well as regional business IT professionals to identify best practices, standards and learning resources that can be put to use in promoting access to broadband.
- Involve Condon School District, North Central Education Service District, Gilliam County, Columbia Gorge Community College, Blue Mountain Community College, Eastern Oregon University and Oregon State University and any other educational institutions in framing a regional access policy to insure service is available to all homes, businesses and schools.
- Convene IT professionals within the organizations mentioned above and independent IT professionals that service the City of Condon and surrounding regions.

- Develop demonstration pilot projects including: Broadband access at Gilliam County Public Library and Condon School by offering on-line classes for school-age and adult learner.

GOAL #4 – Increase the number of new businesses entering the city and existing business retention and expansion by creation of a technically fluent workforce.

Adequate, high capacity broadband is essential to businesses large and small, to teleworkers and to Gilliam County’s important agriculture sector. High quality, high capacity broadband service will enable small businesses to flourish, and attract skilled workers and entrepreneurs to Condon. Quality of life is why people choose to live in Condon but many are prevented from building home businesses or telecommuting due to a lack of broadband service. Service has improved in the area in the last several years, though as more customers want more bandwidth it has gotten difficult if not impossible to get enough capacity to run a business efficiently. Broadband needs to be ubiquitously available to optimize economic development. Wireless broadband sufficient for agriculture applications is unavailable. Agriculture uses require a “big/fast mobile pipe” that is a “threshold above the norm”. Cell phone uses are also limited by the amount of data that can be sent over the current networks. Committee members want to incentivize telecommuters, new small to medium businesses and assist current business with the ability to have affordable, fast broadband. The City of Condon has inexpensive land and home prices, slow paced lifestyle and a safe environment to live while you telecommute. More part-time residents would spend more time and money in Condon if broadband service were affordable and available to them.

Our Priority Action Agenda:

1. **Provide collaboration on increasing adoption rates by establishing access “hubs”.** “Hubs” are single locations that have high speed broadband connections and that are open to the public. By establishing hubs we can expose more residents to using broadband. It is important to involve broadband providers in the effort to increase adoption by working with them to establish the neighborhood hubs along with education efforts on broadband benefits and skills.
2. **Recruit and support local entrepreneurs in technology fields to start or expand businesses in the city.** Develop partnerships to increase business awareness to broadband-linked opportunities, to assist with adoption and utilization skills, and to make technology more accessible to small business.
3. **Expand county wide collaboration within Gilliam County on broadband training, adoption and rural access initiatives.** Most likely partnerships are between the cities of Condon, Arlington, Lonerock and rural Gilliam County residents.

Our Implementation Strategy:

- Explore partnership opportunities between Arlington and Gilliam County, as well as the Small Business Development Center at Columbia Gorge Community College or Blue Mountain Community College, Gilliam County Public Library, Gilliam County Cattlemen, and other agriculture groups.

- Work local, State and Federal agencies as well as private companies to better link our educational institutions, workforce development entities, and local businesses to support development of a technically fluent workforce.

This plan was discussed and crafted by the following members in public meetings:

Mayor Jim Hassing – Representing City of Condon
Councilor Jan Stinchfield – Representing City of Condon & Business Owners
Councilor Donald Jamieson – Representing City of Condon & Business Owners
Condon Police Chief Dale Scobert – Representing City of Condon & Public Safety
Rita Rattray – Representing Business & Education
Robert Waltenburg – Representing Education
Rachel Weinstein – Representing Economic Development
Elizabeth Farrar – Representing Business Owner

This plan was adopted 6th day of April, 2016 by the Condon City Council.

Signed:

_____/Jim Hassing _____ 4/6/2016_____
Jim Hassing, Mayor Date

Attest:

_____/Kathryn Greiner _____ 4/6/2016_____
Kathryn Greiner, City Administrator Date