



Riverside County Broadband Policy

Findings and Declarations

The County of Riverside hereby declares that wireline and wireless communications providing abundant capacity which supports high-speed, advanced digital communications, including **Gigabit-Speed Internet Access**—referred to generically as “**Broadband**” – forms the basis of an essential 21st Century infrastructure in our digital world and global economy. It is vital to the economic development and quality of life for the residents, businesses and institutions of Riverside County and throughout California, and it can enable Riverside County government to operate more efficiently while providing services more cost-effectively.

The ability to connect instantly to information, services and digital tools is becoming increasingly necessary for access to, and success in, education, business, and economic opportunities. The deployment and adoption of **Broadband** is a major strategy to spur economic growth, because it improves productivity, which attracts more capital investment and generates better-paying professional jobs, while saving both time and money for businesses and consumers. **Broadband** also provides an avenue by which needed offerings are delivered to the County’s seniors and disabled, bringing these residents in-home healthcare tools and services such as Telemedicine and other clinical services at a distance.

In addition, **Broadband** is also a “Green Technology” that can, if widely accessed, significantly reduce negative impacts on traffic and the environment by reducing the need for vehicle use, thereby decreasing the use of resources and saving energy.

Although California is home to a wellspring of innovation that leads in the growth and evolution of many technologies, the use of **Broadband** by residents of California only approximates the national average, and there still exists a Digital Divide that must be closed for this region to remain globally competitive. **Broadband** has become a fundamental need of modern life, whether related to job, home, or school. As more and more information and media migrates online, those without ready access to the Internet are increasingly being left behind. Bridging the Digital Divide is about helping those with little, or no, access to the digital world acquire tools to leverage technology in ways advantageous to their economic and personal pursuits. Riverside County is exploring ways to ensure these tools and services are delivered to its constituents via methodologies which will be heavily dependent upon access to high-speed **Broadband**. If the County is to take full advantage of the new technologies to deliver these services more effectively to homes and businesses, it is imperative that **Broadband** be available to the furthest extent possible to everyone living and working in the County of Riverside.



Riverside County is committed to operating governmental functions in as cost-efficient manner as possible and recognizes that information technologies such as **Broadband** can greatly assist in achieving that goal. Riverside County is dedicated to providing public information and increasing online access to government services for the convenience and benefit of residents, as well as reducing downtown congestion and traffic and other negative impacts to the environment. Residents should have access to **Broadband** to transact business with our local government agencies, such as obtaining and paying for building permits or business licenses, paying utility bills, or accessing official documents and maps. **Broadband** links County government with its constituents.

Riverside County is committed to encouraging the families and children living here to be healthy, productive and self-sufficient, and it is recognized that the use of **Broadband** can save both time and money for residents, while also providing opportunities to grow professionally and economically. Therefore, it is important that all residents within Riverside County, particularly lower-income households and those living in publicly-supported housing, to have access to **Broadband**.

Riverside County is committed to helping students obtain the highest-quality education possible and understands that the ability to learn and prepare for higher education is significantly enhanced if schools incorporate digital literacy and applications into the various curricula. The availability of **Broadband**-connected computing devices is an irreplaceable teaching and learning tool for academic achievement, both in the classroom and at home. Riverside County is thus committed to **Digital Inclusion** and increasing residents' participation in the public process through expanded engagement using **Broadband**.

Therefore, it shall be the policy of the County of Riverside to encourage, and when practicable to facilitate, the deployment and adoption of **Broadband** to provide our residents with opportunities, convenience, and a higher quality of life. Furthermore, it is recognized that the speed of data and image transmission capability of the **Broadband** infrastructure is a vital driver of adoption: higher speeds enable more applications that are relevant to the daily lives of consumers. Thus, it also shall be the policy of the County of Riverside to encourage and facilitate upgrades to existing **Broadband** infrastructure to ensure that the public and private sectors have access to sufficient **Broadband** speeds to support consumer demand for new and evolving applications that save time, money and resources.

Roles and Responsibilities

Riverside County recognizes that it has many responsibilities that affect deployment and adoption of **Broadband** technologies and applications, including the following roles: (1) **Policy**



Leader; (2) Planner; (3) Regulator; (4) Consumer; (5) Service provider; and (6) Property Owner. As a **policy leader**, Riverside County may promulgate policies and ordinances to advance and protect the public interest, implement state and national laws that promote and accommodate deployment of **Broadband** facilities, and encourage development and testing of new technologies and applications. It can work with other governmental agencies, as well as the private and non-profit sectors so that the County and its residents can best enjoy the digital economy's benefits and promises. As a **planner**, Riverside County prepares and adopts a **General Plan** and other land-use documents that guide the development of our jurisdiction, thus determining how "smart" growth will be and defining the quality of life for the future. As a **regulator**, Riverside County approves land uses and building permits that can encourage, promote or require "smart" infrastructure and facilities within our jurisdiction, and it also acts to protect consumers and ensure that providers do not discriminate in the provision of services. As a **consumer**, Riverside County purchases telecommunications and information technology equipment and services which, in turn, drives demand and improvements in these technologies and services. As a **service provider**, Riverside County has the ability to expand **e-Government** functions by providing more information and greater access to public services online, thus encouraging **Broadband** adoption, but also making it critical that residents have ready access to **Broadband** so that all can take advantage of the benefits offered by **e-Government**. As a **property owner**, County-owned land and buildings may, in many instances, provide useable areas for placement of wireless and wireline infrastructure and facilities that can be used for the distribution of **Broadband** to consumers. The County also has an interest in requiring that **Broadband** be available to the public on County property. It shall be the policy of Riverside County in all of its roles and responsibilities to actively identify opportunities to implement policies, programs and actions to encourage **Broadband** deployment and adoption.

Implementation

Riverside County shall incorporate these findings and declarations into the **General Plan** and all relevant **Specific Plans, Broadband Master Plan, Redevelopment Agency Master Plans, and Community Sustainability Plan**. It shall adopt the following implementation strategies and actions:

Land Use and Smart Infrastructure

- Promote the provision of **Broadband** infrastructure in all public buildings; major transportation (and other infrastructure) projects; commercial developments; and residential developments and neighborhoods.



- Where feasible, that new or renovated large-scale residential and commercial development projects include the infrastructure components necessary to provide and support **Broadband** and other future state-of-the-art information and communication technologies, such as conduit and riser space.
- Identify local public rights-of-way (RoW) and public facilities that can be used for **Broadband** deployment and, where practicable, promulgate relevant procedures to streamline the approval of permits, licenses and franchises required for the installation of those facilities, consistent with principles of providing a level field of play and ensuring competition for all providers, and consistent with the protection of the public, property and roadway functions.
- Maintain consistency in visual aesthetics as it pertains to **Broadband** facilities, with guidelines for other infrastructure such as street lighting, traffic light control equipment, and power generation to name a few.
- Develop policies that allow for rapid deployment of **Broadband** facilities off the RoW, with appropriate protections for the public and property affected by the deployment, and avoiding proliferation of unnecessary or speculative facilities that may conflict with other important County policies or deter productive deployments.
- Subject to the foregoing, encourage **Broadband** providers to size underground and overhead facilities to accommodate future expansion, changes in technology, and, where possible, the facilities of other telecommunications and utility providers.
- Locate and operate infrastructure and appurtenant facilities, wherever possible, to protect cultural and scenic resources. Site facilities at the lowest possible point along ridge lines in order to minimize visual and aesthetic impacts. Minimize the size and extent of appurtenant facilities, to include antennas and equipment buildings, while still providing room for growth and co-location of future providers. Set guidelines as part of a special-use permit, that the top-most position of a monopole or tower be occupied with antennas to ensure that the ultimate structure height is justified. Use stealth technology solutions for masking antenna profiles. Use muted earth-tone colors that match the natural background setting. Landscape appropriately around the perimeter of facilities to be compatible with the surrounding vegetation.
- Require commitments for sharing new vault, monopole or tower sites as a condition of approval if appropriate and feasible.
- Submit notification and information about all major infrastructure and construction projects, including transportation projects, **Broadband** projects and new residential



subdivisions, to a shared regional and/or statewide web-based database (such as the prototype developed by the California Department of Transportation) so that utility providers and other authorized RoW users, including **Broadband** providers, have the opportunity to coordinate infrastructure deployment in shared trenches, conduit, poles and towers, and other appurtenances to facilitate cost and time savings and minimize duplicative construction.

- Require as a condition of approval the timely removal of communications facilities and equipment when they are no longer needed.

Public Services and Digital Inclusion

- Prepare and implement a **Technology Plan** that uses state-of-the-art **Broadband** and other non-public network information technologies to support the local government operations in the most cost-efficient manner possible, and provide online all vital public information and critical services.
- Continue to improve the County's website both to support the online provision of public information and critical services and to engage and increase citizen participation. Request all County departments post appropriate policies, programs, plans, ordinances and key information online.
- Develop and provide an online comprehensive and standardized Geographic Information System (GIS) that can be used by all public agencies to aid in the provision of public services.
- Promote the use of public buildings, such as libraries, parks and convention centers, as **Broadband** hot spots to provide residents with affordable or free high-speed Internet access while in the public space.
- Ensure that public safety and emergency response agencies are capable of providing real-time information via **Broadband** to facilitate the efficient management of emergencies and natural disasters and to protect lives and property.

Smart Housing

- Work with the business community and private developers to incentivize the provision of state-of-the-art **Broadband**-specific infrastructure, notably fiber conduits, space for vaults and pedestals, and vacant locations set aside for fiber enclosures and associated appurtenances for all new residential subdivisions.



- Explore adding policies to the **General Plan** that will foster the provision and adoption of **Broadband** in all publicly-subsidized housing development projects, including policies that allow for aggregation of demand within and among projects so that, to the extent possible residents of public housing projects have **Broadband** choices comparable to those that are available to other residents in the same geographic area; policies that encourage service providers to offer low-cost plans for provision of **Broadband** that allow all residents to receive the benefits of **Broadband**; policies that encourage deployment of infrastructure within public housing projects that will support provision of **Broadband** by multiple providers; and policies that ensure that residents are aware of the low cost **Broadband** options available to them under private programs, and under state, local and federal **Broadband** programs, such as federal “lifeline” programs.
- Request the local housing authority to adopt policies to promote and support smart affordable housing with **Broadband** infrastructure whenever their public funds are used to subsidize the construction and provision of housing for lower-income residents.

Digital Literacy and Workforce Development

- Integrate digital literacy training into all workforce development programs.
- Provide digital literacy training for all employees.

Designation of Broadband Leader

- The County Executive Officer (CEO) will identify and designate an appropriate individual within management as a coordinator to be responsible for implementing policies related to **Broadband**, information technologies, and **Digital Inclusion**. This designated leader shall develop a plan of action to increase and sustain the use of **Broadband** and information technologies within Riverside County. The **Broadband Action Plan** shall set forth specific goals, objectives, activities and metrics for success for all the relevant responsibilities and roles delineated above. It shall include the promulgation of a **Technology Plan** for the operations and functions within the County government and regular update to the existing **Technology Plan**. The coordinator shall prepare and submit a progress report annually to the Board of Supervisors.
- Direct the **Broadband** coordinator to monitor **Broadband** deployment and adoption within the territorial limits of Riverside County and report rates and trends to the Board of Supervisors.



Interagency Cooperation

- The CEO will outline a process for ensuring inter-agency and inter-jurisdictional cooperation which shall include: sharing this policy with other jurisdictions in the region; meeting with them to explore common needs for **Broadband** infrastructure (including backhaul and middle-mile needs); exploring opportunities to collaborate on **Broadband** applications, such as Telemedicine, or regional projects, such as library networks; and notifying neighboring jurisdictions about major infrastructure projects, such as transportation improvements along shared corridors.

Seek Opportunities

- Explore opportunities to work with other public and private entities, such as schools, special districts, public utilities, and private health and medical providers, to cooperate in joint-ventures on **Broadband** deployment projects and adoption programs.
- Regularly review and identify economic development opportunities (including grant and test bed opportunities) potentially associated with the deployment of **Broadband** facilities; and consider ways in which those opportunities can be realized and leveraged to maximize deployment of **Broadband** facilities and services throughout the County by public or private entities.
- Identify opportunities for the County to encourage **Broadband** deployment as an “anchor tenant” for broadband platforms, and coordinate broadband projects among departments so that those projects maximize the deployment of broadband throughout the County.
- Consider adoption of policies that encourage deployment of open networks or software-defined networks.
- Support federal and state policies that protect and enhance the ability of local governments and regional agencies to ensure that communications systems that meet the needs and interests of all people in a community are deployed, and are deployed in a manner consistent with sound community development.



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