Governance Toolkit for Community Broadband – Stakeholder Involvement

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Overview

▶ Selecting/Identifying Stakeholders

▶ Articulating stakeholder needs, values, and Broadband objectives

▶ Build Alliances and Excitement

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How Do We Identify Stakeholders and Partners? Basic Roadmap

- Identify Key Drivers first
  - What are the key problems we are trying to solve with community Broadband?
- Identify key existing resources
- Identify funding and grant opportunities
- Find Partners and stakeholders that can help address your drivers, and have interests that complement yours
- Articulate stakeholder needs, values, and Broadband objectives
- Get Organized
- Build Alliances and Community Excitement

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Identify Objectives

▶ What are you trying to achieve?

▶ Which ones align best with the main sponsors and should be prioritized?

Cheaper Internet Service for consumers	Universal/Equal Access for citizens	Economic Development for Small Businesses
Technology Innovation to attract high skill jobs	Distance Learning to invigorate communities/prevent brain drain	School & Library access/online courses
	Lower government communications infrastructure costs	
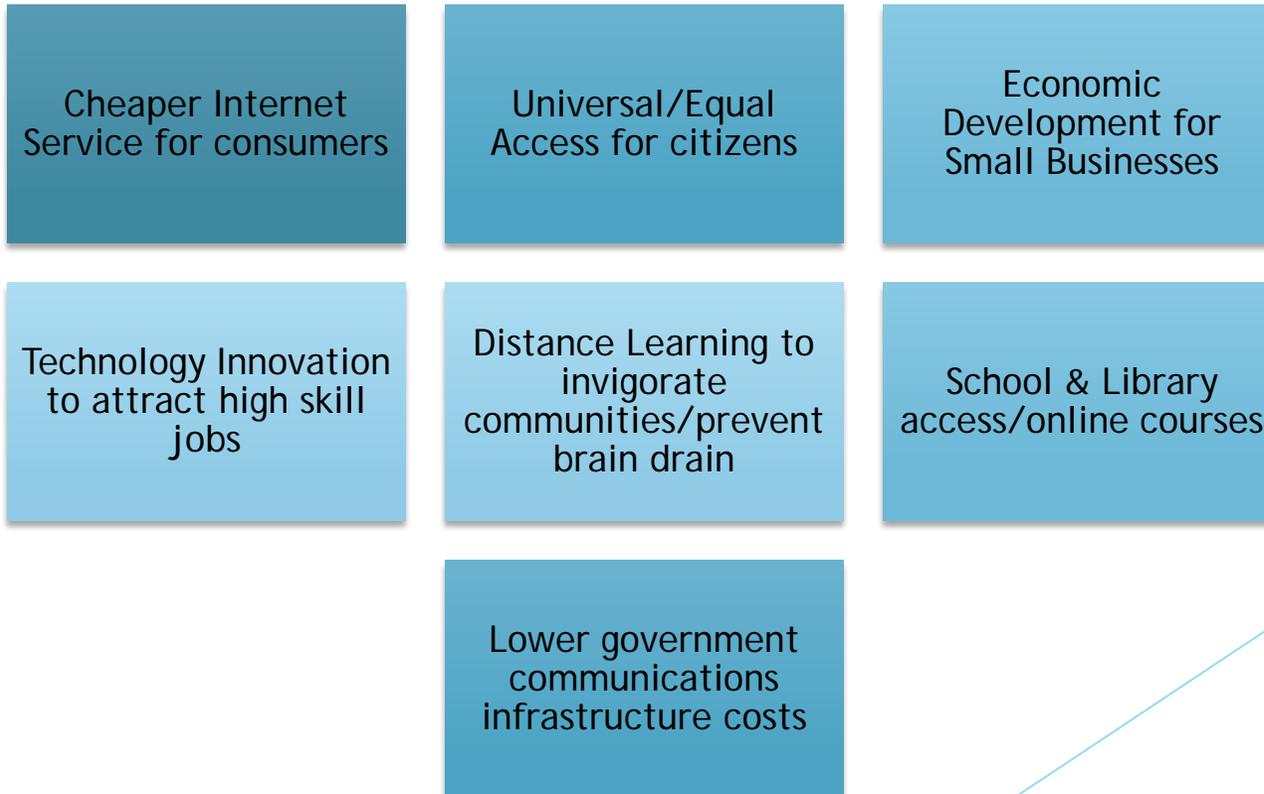
Identify Resources

- Do we or potential partners have:
  - Existing fiber?
  - Access to rights of way and/or conduits?
  - Technical expertise?
  - Innovative users –
    - High tech companies
    - Colleges
  - Anchor institutions that can feed a connection to larger user group.
    - Schools, libraries, colleges, government facilities, community centers, public safety buildings, etc.
  - Community organizations with reach to diverse users?

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Identify Funding/Grants Mechanisms

▶ See Community BB Funding Guidebook on KYWired

- ▶ Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)
- ▶ Community Connect Grants
- ▶ Distance Learning & Telemedicine (DLT) Loans and Grants
- ▶ Economic Development Assistance (EDA) Programs
- ▶ E-Rate Discounts for Schools and Libraries
- ▶ Healthcare Connect Fund
- ▶ Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Programs
- ▶ Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Loans
- ▶ Telehealth Network Grant Program

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Funding/Grants Mechanisms and Stakeholders

- Note that each grant implies different types of Partners and stakeholders

  - For example, Community Connect Grants target deployment to completely unserved, very low-income rural communities so partnerships with community groups working with such populations will be advantageous.

  - Another example: E-Rate Discounts for Schools and Libraries provide ability (if organized right) to pay for much of the cost of deploying fiber that can serve as infrastructure for multiple goals, but to take maximal advantage requires schools and libraries to be customers who solicit competitive bids, and another entity, typically local government, to be the owner/provider who participates in bid process.

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Identify Stakeholders/Partners

These will be unique to your region and community. No one model works:

- **Influencers –** faith, community, government, technology leaders to help articulate and spread vision and approach

- **Beneficiaries –** end users, underserved populations, anchor and community institutions, downtown associations etc. that will benefit from the fiber optic network

- **Partners –** organizations that help deliver the network and services such fiber plant owners, service providers, funders, resource sharing entities etc.

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From Problems to Objectives

Stakeholder Drivers → Stakeholder Needs → Community Broadband objectives

Examples of Stakeholders

Partners

- Resource Owners
  - Physical Plant
  - Expertise
  - Operational Capabilities
- Service Providers/Operators
- Community Interest/Advocacy Groups
- Funders/Donors

Beneficiaries

- Potential Customers
- Underserved groups
- Local Businesses
- Community facilities
- Educational institutions

Influencers

- Community Groups and Leaders
- Local Governments
- Economic Development Authorities
- Faith communities

When are stakeholders selected?

- Initial needs/desires established first, but new Partners will revise needs as they are added

Establish Desire/ Need/ Drivers

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Identify Partners

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Establish Business Case

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Identify and select financing model

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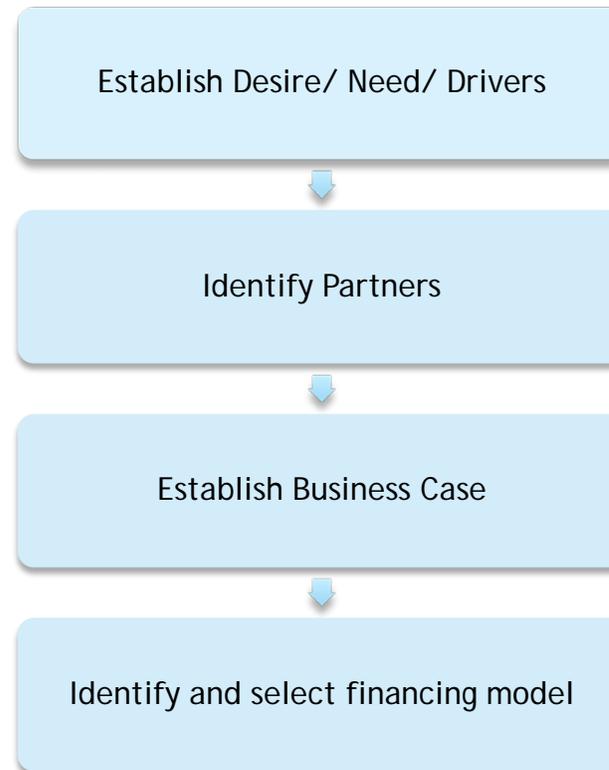
How do We Decide Which to Engage?

► You likely already know your **Influencers and community leaders**

► Start with the **beneficiaries** that most readily derive from your initial stakeholders and drivers – for example, libraries, schools, government agencies etc.

► Reach out to potential **Partners** systematically based on breakdown of types of partners. For example, for **Resource Owners**, state transportation agencies often deploy fiber along state roads, and public utilities also often need fiber deployment for smart grid or other purposes and can be natural allies.

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You got funds for planning project or initial deployment. Now what?

- ▶ Use your Partners and Influencers to build excitement and momentum to beneficiaries
- ▶ Articulate goals and timelines and long term vision
- ▶ Get people involved in planning process
- ▶ Consider newsletter or email list to keep in contact and create supportive constituents

Case Study: Carroll County, MD

- **Driver:** Very limited commercial wired communications infrastructure put County at disadvantage economically in terms of attracting residents and business.

- **Initial Stakeholders:** municipal and County officials, private citizens, and public sector IT staff developed strategic vision to incrementally increase broadband.

- Senior IT staff from the public school system, community college, and public library system worked with the Carroll County Department of Economic Development, as well as with the cable regulatory commission and representatives of a number of municipalities, to devise a strategy for modest public investment in middle-mile fiber infrastructure.

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Case Study: Carroll County, MD

▶ Initial rollout targeted low hanging fruit of County government, schools, libraries, and the community college.

▶ This middle-mile fiber could also potentially be leveraged in the future to enable private sector last-mile deployment.

▶ Deployment had intended result of positioning County as more attractive and its modest infrastructure and strategic vision made it ready for stimulus broadband funded opportunity when it presented itself.

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Case Study: National Capital Region

▶ **Example of Changing Drivers/Stakeholders**

▶ **Driver:** Back in early 2000s increasing importance of government data and application infrastructure to support enterprise, but remote backup options and storage very expensive

▶ **Initial Stakeholders:** Northern VA CIOs developed vision for mutual back up and recovery by connecting existing fiber optic networks together and commissioned CTC to develop feasibility and business case study.

  ▶ CIOs already had cooperative organizational frameworks in NVERS and MWCOG, where they met monthly in each

  ▶ CTC study recommended interconnecting their existing fiber optic networks which most had developed as part of their franchise cable agreements with Comcast and COX, and leveraging those agreements for cost-effective construction of interconnecting fiber.

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Case Study: National Capital Region

- CIOs recommended using network for both mutual backup and recovery, but also for public safety needs, and recommended pilot between two jurisdictions.
- A couple of CIOs engaged their respective CAOs for support, and worked with their franchise cable providers to build interconnections

- Post- 9/11 UASI provided grant opportunity to support public safety interoperability and communications, and MWCOG CIOs worked to revision the project with a new driver of public safety communications
  - Used both NOVA and COG existing organizational frameworks, and existing informal relationships.
  - New driver -> revised needs -> revised stakeholders
  - From IT as primary end-users to public safety as primary end-users. But infrastructure and capability is flexible to support any use.

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Case Study: National Capital Region

- ► Got CAOs on board to support grant application and received it.
- ► Multi-year UASI grant projects have steadily increased footprint.
- ► Existing investments and long term strategic vision allowed to take advantage of one-time Public Safety Interoperable Communications grant from commerce department, and also broadband stimulus grants.
- ► Later, changes in Cable Franchise environment required another strategic shift as incumbents started viewing managed services and dark fiber as profit centers.
  - ► Regional governments responded by incrementally replacing fiber optic cable with new jurisdiction-owned fiber, that did not depend on franchise cable providers.

Contact Information

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