

Broadband GOALS and STRATEGIES for Mendocino County

GOAL #1: Essential telecommunication services for all Residents, Businesses, Anchor Institutions, and Local Government Agencies (especially Public Safety and Emergency Services) are reliable and redundant/diverse.

Strategies:

1. Engage telecom providers in direct dialog to address telecom reliability and diversity/redundancy issues.
2. Engage with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) in proceedings on relevant telecommunication issues.
3. Request Incumbent Providers to share critical information with high-level county public safety officials on points of vulnerability in county networks, such as communities where facilities are non-redundant/diverse.
4. Document any major telecommunication outages, and use such documentation to engage providers, CPUC and policy-makers at the local, state, and national level for corrective action.
5. Work with willing providers, the CPUC, and other entities to develop method to document and correct on-going individual landline outages which lead to loss of 911 services for residents.

GOAL #2: All county residents have affordable high-speed broadband access in their homes.

“Affordable high-speed broadband” is defined as meeting the current speed standards as set by the California Public Utilities Commission; usage is not restricted by data caps; and at a cost of no more than 2% of average household monthly income.”

Strategies:

1. Work with all willing providers to identify barriers and solutions to deployment.
2. Work with all willing providers to expand broadband and mobile networks.
3. Support and work with all willing communities to organize and develop last-mile connectivity plans.

4. Leverage any opportunities to provide home access for K-12 students (as promoted by the Mendocino County Office of Education to unlock 24/7 educational opportunities), and for college students to enable online educational opportunities.
5. Assess ground truth broadband availability for the number of unserved and underserved households in the county.
6. Share federal and state grant information for deployment opportunities with providers and organizations. Encourage and support appropriate pilot projects and applications.
7. Advocate locally, regionally, and nationally for appropriate policies and programs for expanded last mile broadband deployment.
8. Increase the number of public-access computers and wi-fi hotspots in county libraries and other public spaces throughout the county.
9. Reduce economic barriers for access through support for low-income access programs.
10. Increase broadband adoption through promotion of digital literacy programs in schools, libraries, and non-profits.

GOAL #3: Competitively-priced high-speed broadband infrastructure throughout the county is developed to attract, retain, and develop Internet-reliant businesses.

Strategies:

1. Cities and county research and consider alternative models for broadband investment and infrastructure development, such as Public-Private-Partnership models (using resources such as Next Century Cities, Coalition for Local Internet Choice and Institute for Local Self-Reliance).
2. Collaborate with the other North Bay North Coast Broadband Consortium (NBNCBC) counties and our elected representatives to find resources to launch the implementation of the Route 101 Middle-Mile Infrastructure project.
3. Break down broadband funding silos by cooperative relationships and enhanced communications between Anchor Institutions (schools, colleges, libraries, and Health Care Facilities), communities, local governments, public safety, and providers.
4. Coordinate planning efforts for broadband deployment involving programs such as The California Advanced Service Fund (CASF), the Connect America Fund (CAF), The Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California (CENIC), FirstNet, E-rate, and California Tele-Health Network (CTN) and other grant programs for the development of infrastructure.

5. Support appropriate state and federal legislation for funding of broadband programs and projects. Oppose detrimental state “pre-emption” legislation that takes away local control.
6. Encourage high-speed work centers until this necessary infrastructure is fully developed for economic development.

GOAL #4: County and Cities takes leadership in broadband issues---adopts policies to facilitate broadband deployment, and finds ways to leverage existing assets.

Strategies:

1. County identifies and considers adopting policies that facilitate broadband deployment, such as appropriate streamlined project permitting, a county “dig-once” policy, or master lease agreements that allow the installation of broadband infrastructure on utility poles and light standards.
2. County uses its leadership position to elevate the broadband conversation at local level (city government, Municipal Advisory Councils, Service Districts, Board of Supervisors, North Bay-North Coast Broadband Consortium), state level (California State Association of Counties, Rural County Representatives of California, California Public Utilities Commission), and national level (Federal Communications Commission).
3. County and Cities advocate for open-access broadband infrastructure whenever feasible.
3. County and city governments improve how goods and services are delivered by aspiring to offer all government services as web-based.
4. County and cities encourages other groups (Economic Development and Financing Corporation, Non-Profits, Chambers of Commerce, Farm Bureau, etc) to elevate the broadband conversation and highlight broadband challenges and successes in their outreach.
5. County encourages all departments to include broadband access as a priority, in replication of the national effort of the Broadband Opportunity Council, where federal agencies were directed to incorporate broadband into their missions since broadband is now essential infrastructure. Departments identify ways in which they can facilitate deployment of broadband, reduce barriers, or possibly even make funding available for broadband.
6. An inventory of existing county assets which could be leveraged for broadband deployment inventory (such as buildings and Rights of Way) is maintained within respective departments, and cross-communication facilitated between broadband stakeholders.

7. County and city websites includes broadband resources and information, and/or links to other websites

GOAL #5: Mendocino County develops a county-wide comprehensive Broadband Plan by 2019.

Strategies:

1. A County Broadband Plan is developed from the most current Broadband Goals and Strategies endorsed by the Board of Supervisors.
2. Cities are encouraged to develop and adopt their own broadband plan, tailored to their own needs and jurisdiction, for incorporation into the larger county broadband plan. Cities are encouraged to develop cost-savings analysis for services from an alternative network (see Goal #3, Strategy 1) for incorporation into their plan.
3. The county plan should address how to best get all residents and all businesses online, so that the network can be used to drive economic growth and social progress.
4. The plan should be adaptable and reviewed regularly to consider changing needs, broadband metrics and consumer usages.
5. The County Plan should be a model plan for other counties to adopt.