

Summary of Panel Discussion Highlights -10/1/2020

HOW TO ADVANCE INVESTMENT IN BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE CAPITAL REGION

Internet Service Providers Roundtable

Panelists

- Rochelle Swanson, Northern California Government Affairs Manager for **Crown Castle**
- Andrew Cardin, SVP of Operations at **Digital Path**
- Phillip Deneef, Chief Strategy Officer at **GeoLinks**
- Trace Tedde-Vega, Manager of Development for Sacramento/Northern/Central Valley at **Zayo**
- Rodrigo de la Rosa, Senior Manager at **T-Mobile**

Introduction: Overview of each provider (infrastructure and service) and broadband work

Provider	Broadband work
Crown Castle	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The country's largest shared infrastructure company; customers include ISPs, education, municipalities, private companies● Neutral-host format● Fiber in the ground, small cells, macro towers● Will often host multiple carriers on a single asset
Digital Path	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Headquartered in Chico; round since 2005● Wireless broadband and voice services;● Operates mostly in Northern California, primarily in rural areas
GeoLinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Established in 2011● Fixed wireless network construction company and operator; works with Crown and Zayo, among others● Largest award-winner in California for the Connect America II Fund● Does a "hybrid" approach of working with partners who have fiber in the ground and traditional towers, plus constructing its own towers that run on renewable energy
Zayo	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● All-fiber network● Provider to wireless ISPs, municipalities, school districts● Also works with carriers
T-Mobile	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Trying to close the homework gap by offering to eligible households data and free mobile hotspots ("Project 10Million")● Partnered with Google for 100,000 hotspots and 13,000 tablets● Working with Apple for reduced service plans

The ISP panelists identified what they need in order to reduce the barriers to broadband infrastructure and deployment:

- 1. Increased prioritization of broadband infrastructure, even during shelter-in-place.**
- 2. Policies and processes that are aligned with community goals.**
- 3. Streamlined and efficient permitting, including more certainty and shorter wait times.**
 - Overburdensome permitting is more of a time issue than it is a cost issue; for the ISPs, the biggest challenge is not the finance portion, but the project management and timeline aspects of the process.
 - For example, with colocation: When it comes to upgrades, if the expansion is not substantial, then the review process should not have to be as exhaustive. Instead, securing a permit in that case should be administrative or over the counter.
 - If an ISP knows that they can secure a permit in 90 days, they are more likely to do business in that jurisdiction. Reduce uncertainties - providers will go to the path of least resistance
- 4. Streamlined policies and processes.**
 - Adding additional processes can have the unintended consequence of becoming overburdensome; some jurisdictions have consultants advising more fees, etc.
 - Even “Dig Once” can be an obstacle at times. Build schedules are very different, and “dig once” policies can sometimes result in delays of up to two years.
 - Local staffing capacity is an issue, especially for smaller communities.
 - The faster fiber can be pulled, the faster wireless can be extended.
- 5. Efficient online tools.**
 - Glitches in the application or intake process can significantly increase the time it takes to secure the necessary permits.
- 6. Clear lines of communication.**
 - For example: Ensuring that there is a fair and swift process for notifying ISPs when there are roadblocks or moratoriums.
- 7. Identifying and adopting best practices in the region.**
 - This is especially important when jurisdictions encounter issues that they have not dealt with before.
 - This can be done as part of a Broadband Master Plan.
- 8. A complete and up-to-date asset inventory**
 - This ensures that ISPs do not run into issues stemming from the segregation of assets, and that the parties involved are seeing all opportunities for partnerships with local governments.
 - This can be done as part of a Broadband Master Plan; ensure assets are known.

The ISP panelists identified some of the best practices that they've come across that are currently being implemented in certain jurisdictions:

- 1. Design guidelines with up-to-date functionality and certainty.**
- 2. Master permits or term permits.**
 - Under a master permit, the ISP works with the City upfront and agrees upon several criteria (e.g., how many nodes, what the design is going to be, etc.). The City then decides what the length of the review and inspection process will be, based on the agreed upon criteria. The City also gets paid the fees upfront, so they can make use of the revenue right away. The build schedules are then faster. A jurisdiction can issue an RFP to get an idea of current best practices.
- 3. Over-the-counter permits for colocation.**
- 4. Public-private partnerships.** And bring more people into the process, with willingness to explore collaboration opportunities.
- 5. Having a subject-matter expert within the municipality and making that person's contact information widely known.**
 - This staff person would act as a bridge between those working on the technical side of things, and those working on the public works side of things.
- 6. Having a staff dedicated to processing permit applications and other related matters.**
- 7. Having design standards separate from codes.**
- 8. Allowing electronic signatures, as opposed to having to mail documents with wet signatures.**
- 9. (In San José) An escrow account that the city withdraws funds from to process applications.**
- 10. Adopting innovations, such as micro-trenching.**
- 11. Leveraging the topology of the state.**
- 12. Understanding, from a person-to-person perspective, what the impact is of streamlining and other best practices.**
 - This involves having individual conversations on over-the counter permitting, how to streamline Conditional Use Permits, etc., and allowing these things to happen on a case-to-case basis, as a foundation for formulating broader policies and best practices. Explore e-online opportunities.
 - It is akin to starting something with a pilot, followed by a process to do it at scale.

Local Elected Officials Roundtable

Panelists:

- **Mayor Pro Tempore Tom Stallard**, City of Woodland
- **Supervisor Don Nottoli**, Sacramento County Board of Supervisors
- **Supervisor Gary Bradford**, Yuba County Board of Supervisors

Introduction: Overview of each local elected official and their jurisdiction:

Local elected official	Overview of jurisdiction
Mayor Stallard, City of Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● City of 60,000 population; most cities in California are smaller● Agriculturally-focused city; farmers need broadband for success, and along the supply chain● Upcoming Woodland Research Technology Park will make the City part of the epicenter of the state's food and agriculture capabilities.
Supervisor Nottoli, Sacramento County District 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Has urban, suburban, and large swaths of rural● Large district, 650 sq. Miles, from the Delta to Rancho Cordova; growing population centers like Elk Grove and Rancho and very rural communities like Isleton and in the Delta● Sectors include manufacturing, agriculture (esp. Grapes and dairy), health, recreation, and growing sectors
Supervisor Bradford, Yuba County District 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● A growing rural county, with a mix of terrain● Majority of the population resides on the Valley floor, most within a few miles of the river; the rest is Foothills and forest; new housing growth planned● Primary industries are agriculture, healthcare, defense, and government. Growth opportunities include Beale, sports and entertainment (Casino), health, new job centers

The local elected officials on the panel identified the following challenges that they face in broadband infrastructure and deployment:

- 1. There are not enough resources to fund staff dedicated to broadband work.**
- 2. There are multiple issues requiring the jurisdiction's attention, but a finite amount of staff capacity and other resources, although the critical importance is recognized. Sometimes specialized expertise is needed.**
- 3. Affordability of choice, providers needed. It's a struggle especially for low income residents to get connected, both cost and lower options. COVID has shown all the**

disparities and needs (i.e., distance learning, remote work, telemedicine, agtech, emergency services, etc.

4. There are vast opportunities to upgrade. Suburban communities need better bb speeds and access as well as rural unserved/underserved but funding needed.

The local elected officials on the panel identified some solutions to address these barriers:

1. Embrace the future; hear from providers and make the process easier for them. Build on improvements that have been made already by local governments.
2. Find collaborative solutions with ISPs and other private partners.
3. Combine investment from the private sector side with collaboration on the public works side, with the ultimate goal of private investment but public service. Leverage public assets through partnerships.
4. Encourage and incentivize ISPs and the private sector to take advantage of trenching ordinances and other policies. Look at best practices/streamline the process.
5. Look at rights of way for transportation projects. There are a lot of deteriorated road surfaces to be improved. Microtrenching is important.
6. Develop a Broadband Master Plan, for jurisdictions that may not have one yet.
7. Collaboration and communication is important. Work together, including across departments in jurisdictions, and with providers. Make the process clear.