

Key Assessments

Description

To improve connectivity, it is important that local governments start by learning the basics and gain a better understanding of what currently exists in their community. After assembling your planning team, the next step is to assess the state of connectivity in your region, determine what services residents have and what services they need, and identify community resources that can be leveraged to improve connectivity.

Gathering key information and mapping your assets help you identify the type of solution that the community needs most, establish priorities, build the funding case, and evaluate the implementation of specific projects.

Rationale

- Identifies assets available to encourage the expansion of connectivity in your region
- Understands the potential role of municipal or regional governments in infrastructure deployment
- Helps mitigate potential issues and challenges that may impact broadband expansion in your area
- Prioritizes digital inclusion

Outcome

Key community information and statistics, as well as a detailed list of community assets.

Key Assessments

There are a few key planning assessments that will need to be conducted to inform the decisions to be made about connectivity expansion. Note that you may need the assistance of industry experts to collect and analyze some of that information. Key assessments to consider include:

- **Asset inventory:** a list of assets owned by local governments that can be leveraged to encourage the expansion of connectivity (see table on next page). This includes place-based assets that highlight unique aspects of your community and may give your area a competitive advantage.
- **Community needs assessment:** involves surveying residents, businesses, and local institutions about current and future service demand and use. Conducting surveys and public engagements is helpful to gather this type of information and identify community needs and priorities.
- **Gap analysis:** map that illustrates regional boundaries, number and extent of populated areas, existing backbone and last-mile infrastructure, and service coverage for both cellular and high-speed internet.

Tips

1. Review existing regional and community plans (i.e., economic, OCPs, sustainability, emergency management) for vision statements, priorities, and associated data.



Use the asset categories and descriptions below to create a list of community assets that can be leveraged to address connectivity needs, regardless of what role local governments wish to play in connectivity. Some asset inventories may already exist as part of other community development planning efforts (e.g., economic development, regional tourism strategy).

Asset Category	Description	Examples
Geographical	These assets describe the natural landscape that need to be considered when planning for connectivity. Some may influence the range of technology options that are available to your community, while others are intended to be kept in their natural state and not used for expanding connectivity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waterways; mountains, ecosystems and wildlife habitat (i.e., wetlands, forests) • Topology and line of sight
Local Institutions	This category of assets consists of organizations that provide services and leadership in your community. Focus on your key and emerging social and economic drivers that could benefit from improved connectivity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic infrastructure (i.e., hospitals, schools, fire stations, community centres, libraries) • Research centres • Parks and recreation areas • NGOs and non-profits
Passive Infrastructure	These assets relate to existing civil infrastructure that can be used to attach cables and wireless antennas as part of a network deployment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation networks (i.e., roads, airports, railways) • Utilities (i.e., electricity, phone, cable, water and sewer) • Government property
Policy & Regulations	These encompass local regulations and processes that affect the availability and delivery of services to your community. Policy and regulations can be leveraged to attract private investment in your region or develop a public-private partnership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rights-of-way • Bylaws (i.e., dig-once, open access) • Permitting process and fees
Human Resources	These assets refer to talent and skills in different areas relevant for connectivity projects such as financial, technical, policy and planning, administration as well as community outreach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical staff (i.e., IT, engineers) • Billing system administrators • Training and workforce development programs • Social networks and professional organizations