

H-GAC Director's Meeting
June 30, 2020

Regional High-Speed Internet Strategy

2014 – 2018 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
Gulf Coast Economic Development District



Made possible in part by a grant from the U.S Economic Development Administration

GULF COAST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
Gulf Coast Economic Development District
P.O. Box 22777, Houston, TX 77227-2777
3555 Timmons Lane, Suite 120, Houston, TX 77027
www.gcedd.org



Checking the Connection

Whether it's for business, education, or personal use, high-speed internet service, or broadband, is increasingly must-have infrastructure for communities and residents. The Gulf Coast Economic Development District's (GCEDD) Regional Gaps in High-Speed Internet Services Report outlines the challenges the 13-county Houston-Galveston region faces in closing current gaps in broadband service, as well as potential solutions.

Challenges & Solutions

Cost
Challenge - Service providers have little economic incentive to provide broadband infrastructure in less profitable locations.
Solution - Communities can install broadband infrastructure, or fiber, using dig once policies; develop public-private partnerships; and consider streamlining policies.

Difficult to Pinpoint Data Gaps
Challenge - Data is available, but it is inaccurate, dated, and imprecise.
Solution - The GCEDD will conduct two studies of broadband access and needs in select communities and create a template for communities to use for local surveys and assessments.

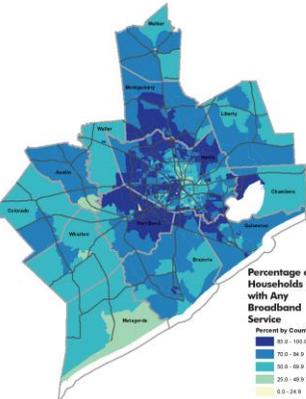
Lack of Competition
Challenge - Broadband service is typically provided only by large, private telecommunications companies.
Solution - Communities may engage in public-private partnerships, such as building a localized network and giving a private provider maintenance and operation access.

Limited Local Capacity
Challenge - Some communities do not have the expertise to develop an effective local broadband program or access available grants.
Solution - The GCEDD provides information and resources for local communities interested in expanding broadband services for businesses and residents.

Next Steps

The GCEDD is developing a regional plan to determine the best strategies for expanding broadband in the region, including:

- Local broadband assessments
- Recommendations and strategies for expanding broadband.
- Case studies of broadband expansion in the region
- Resources and grant information
- Model ordinances, policies, and regulations



Percentage of Households with Any Broadband Service
Percent by County

- 85.0 - 100.0
- 70.0 - 84.9
- 50.0 - 69.9
- 20.0 - 49.9
- 0.0 - 19.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Key Themes

- Broadband access is typically lower in rural areas.
- Broadband adoption is reduced in areas with lower per-capita incomes.
- Broadband network quality is inconsistent across the region.

Visit www.gcedd.org to view the Regional Gaps in High-Speed Internet Service Report.

GULF COAST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
HGC
Houston-Galveston Area Council
CE0719

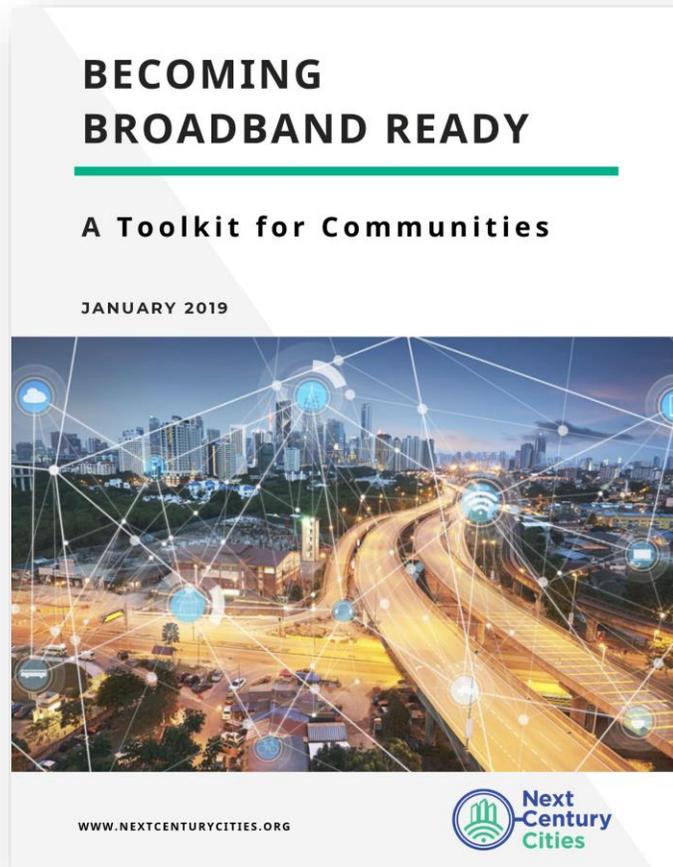


Regional Plan for High-Speed Internet



GULF COAST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
HGC
Houston-Galveston Area Council

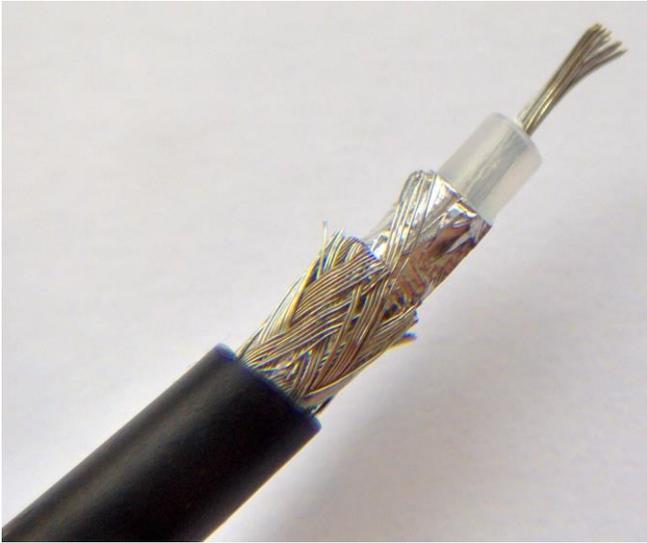
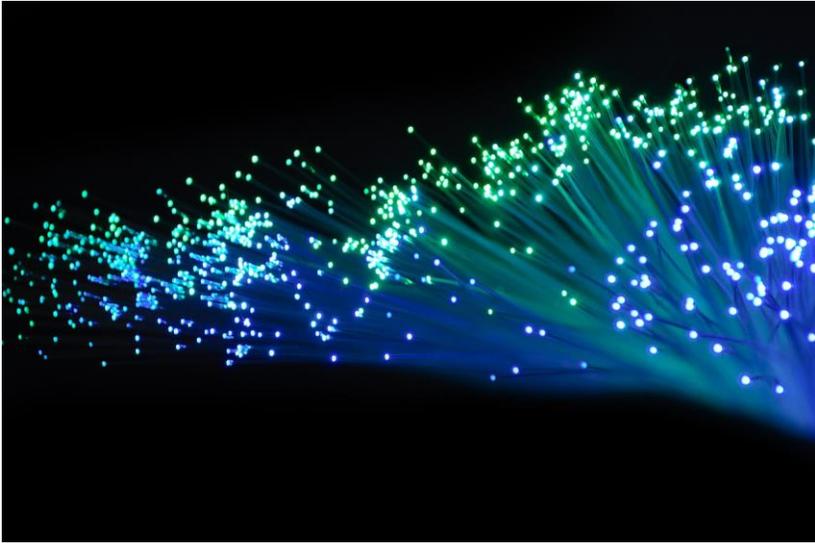
Regional High-Speed Internet Strategy



Recommendations for Local Governments:

1. Develop a plan based on Becoming Broadband Ready Toolkit
2. Adopt a “Dig Smart” Policy
3. Update building codes to require conduit to the home on new construction

Regional High-Speed Internet Strategy



Regional High-Speed Internet Strategy

