



Broadband Strategic Research Community Fora

Current Provincial Context





Current Context

- In context of developing a “going-forward” I&IT Strategy, MGS is currently reviewing the status of provincial access to connectivity, including:
 - Reviewing broadband pilots and programs to determine lessons learned and to inform the development of a future strategy to support enhanced connectivity access throughout the province.
 - Developing provincial maps that identify existing gaps and track progress towards comprehensive access.
 - Actively monitoring recent CRTC decision on use of Deferral Account Funding to expand broadband access in rural communities and providing a provincial perspective to the development of expansion plans.
 - Developing Community Toolkit to assist those communities that are ready to move forward with implementation planning (readiness assessment; model RFP; business case development; partnership agreements).
 - Proceeding with Broadband Strategic Research Initiative.



Lessons Learned: Provincial & Federal Experience

Post-implementation review of 5 broadband projects in Ontario recently completed

- Key findings/conclusions are:
 - ✓ **Scale is critically important.** *Small towns do not have large enough market to create sustainability for a provider and need a larger area to leverage economies of scale.*
 - ✓ **On the ground understanding** *of the local market environment (demographics, density, income level, topology) contributes to effective deployment to optimize ROI.*
 - ✓ **Partners are essential** *and need to contribute financially to a project. Partnerships foster stability, community focus and relationships. Projects need to share knowledge, develop market and sustainability requirements.*
 - ✓ **Community leadership** *is a key criteria of success as it provides focus, support and education to businesses and citizens as well as to service providers.*
 - ✓ **Technical and project management** *expertise is required at the community level to support needs assessment and project implementation.*
 - ✓ **Sustainability** *requires a parallel community development process to ensure the adoption and use of technology by all sectors of the local economy and individuals.*



Going Forward

- Access to information and communication technology will continue to change our social and economic context in Ontario.
- Proactively planning for these shifts from a public policy point of view is essential.
- Need to understand the global implications of access technology and equip ourselves to make fundamental decisions as to how to harness, or mitigate, some of the anticipated trends and impacts.
- When and how can these trends be impacted? What are the implications of doing so?



Just a few of the questions...

- What new possibilities does high-speed access offer for enabling economic transitions, supporting social development and changing the current trajectory of urban growth?
- Basic high-speed infrastructure enables participation in the digital economy, but what will it take to attract, retain and support information intensive industry in the future?
- At a time when demographic shifts are putting pressure on the labour market, how can technology provide the means for maximizing our existing human resources?
- How does access technology enable government to improve its capacity to do sophisticated policy analysis, including place-based policy development and move the yardsticks of service delivery in the future?
 - How can governments get their own "place-based" information to work more effectively in this arena?
- Access is a pre-condition for effective and inclusive engagement of citizens in the governmental process, but what other factors must also be present?