The Broadband for All Permitting Roundtable met virtually on Wednesday September 4, 2024, at 11:00 a.m. OBDL Access and Deployment Advisor Maria Kelly welcomed attendees and provided a quick overview of the meeting.

Opening Remarks

Assistant Deputy Director Cole Przybyla of the California Department of Technology (CDT) Office of Broadband & Digital Literacy provided opening remarks regarding the Broadband for All Action plan, including Action item 6.

Senior Advisor for Economic Policy, Derek Kirk, of California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development provided additional opening remarks regarding the impact and importance of broadband access and deployment for the State.

Agenda

Maria Kelly briefly provided an overview of the Broadband for All Permitting roundtable agenda for the day.

Agenda Item 1 – Broadband for All

Maria Kelly provided a recap of the Broadband for All Action Plan with a recap of the timeline for Broadband for All, including the creation of the Broadband Council, Executive Orders, Senate Bill 156, Middle Mile Broadband Initiative and Last Mile Programs, and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Broadband Programs and the goals of the Broadband for All Action Plan.

Agenda Item 2 – Permitting Overview

Access and Deployment Advisor Maria Kelly provided an overview of the Broadband for All Action Plan regarding permitting at the local, state, and federal levels. She also highlighted Action Item 6, which charged the California Department of Technology to explore various actions to enhance permitting processes at all levels of government through meaningful partnerships.

Agenda Item 3 – Panel for Local and Regional Efforts

Access and Deployment Advisor Maria Kelly, moderated a panel that participated and spoke on a variety of local and regional permitting efforts, including barriers, development processes, strategies, and policy considerations that support broadband deployment. The panel consisted of:

- Chris Schmidt, California Department of Transportation
- Fred Luna, Santa Barbara County Association of Governments
- Linnea Jackson, Hoopa Valley Public Utilities District
- Loreli Cappel, City of Atascadero
- Roland Ok, Southern California Association of Governments
- Trish Kelly, Valley Vision

Agenda Item 4 – Resources

Maria Kelly provided a recap of the Broadband for All Portal planning and permitting resources page. She also gave examples of resources and links to those resources at the federal, state, and local levels.

Closing Remarks

Broadband Action Plan Manager Joleah Jackson of California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development gave closing remarks, thanked all attendees and panelists for their time, as well as provided attendees with the Broadband Readiness survey.

Roundtable adjoined at 12:10 PM.

Transcript

Good morning, everybody. We'll slowly continue to let people in as we wait to get started. Just give us another seconds or a minute feel free to introduce yourself in chat. Chat will be open during this meeting. While we, you know, want to have you engage in questions or comments, but also please feel free to introduce yourself to our permitting Round Table.

Alright, we'll get started, and people can join as they show up in our waiting room. We have about 70 registrations this morning, so welcome everybody. If you want to have your camera on, feel free to leave your camera on we will not be, you know, we're going to keep it open. We want to have a round table, when we do get to the panelists, we'll drop the slide show would ask, maybe, if you would like to please turn your cameras off so we can highlight them. Please make sure you're muted. We will be tracking chat and looking for questions that we can help guide the conversation during the panelists round table portion of the conversation and tracking questions, so please feel free to engage via chat. I'll cover more of that in a couple of slides, but we'll go ahead and kick off and get started, and I'll pass it off to Cole.

Good morning, everyone, and thank you for attending today's permitting Round Table. It's great to see a lot of familiar faces. My name is Cole Przybyla and I would like to welcome you today on behalf of the California Department of Technology and the Office of Broadband Digital Literacy, where I currently serve as the Assistant Deputy director. The Office of Broadband Digital Literacy through the Broadband for All Action Plan was tasked with leading action item 6 which is to explore permitting processes at all levels of government through meaningful partnerships. And so today we'll be covering some key highlights of where the effort started and where we are today. And more importantly, what we need to be collectively looking towards on moving forward. Over the past years, the California Department of technology has led and participated in presenting to California Broadband stakeholders and permitting conversations and will continue to do so. Today you'll hear about multiple efforts to reduce barriers to broadband infrastructure deployment in both the planning stages and will highlight the importance of this effort as the State implemented Sb. 156 in the mineral Broadband initiative. Next, I'd like to welcome a partner and friend, Derek Kirk, who's the senior advisor for economic policy from the California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development, Derek.

Thanks so much, Cole. It is a privilege to be with you all today. As Cole said, my name is Derek Kirk. I'm the senior advisor for economic policy at GoBiz. I was privileged to be to rejoin the GoBiz team at the start of July and am excited to be back on this team working in partnership with CDT and the Office of Broadband Digital Literacy. I, I manage the office of Regional Economic Development Initiatives, an office that is

dedicated to partnering with communities to implementing economic strategies, accessing resources, and streamlining processes to ensure that we're not only supporting the creation of jobs, but access to those jobs. And so I'm excited and so appreciative of the team at the Office of Broadband Digital Literacy and all of CDT for collaborating with us to support so many communities in these endeavors. Thank you so much.

Thank you, Derek. Thank you. Cole. This is an effort in partnership with GoBiz and the Office of Broadband Digital Literacy. So, my name is Maria Kelly, I am the access and deployment advisor in the Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy. I'll be helping move us through the process and the conversation this morning. But I'd also really like to take a moment to thank the team, Joleah Jackson, from GoBiz, and my coworker and teammate Luke Ivazian who's helping run this meeting. So again, appreciative for the collective efforts that are getting us through, keep, continuing to focus on these permitting conversations. We will be tracking your questions to the best of our ability in chat. So please, do you know, keep them coming, feel free to also raise your hand, and we will answer, you know, call on you as we are able, would like to get through sort of the 1st few slides so we can move to the engagement portion, and we'll be dropping links in chat as well. So, covering the agenda, we've done our welcome, we want, we'll cover a high, level Broadband for All. Probably all of you, or most of you are familiar with that, but always try to want to frame it, how we got to where we are and where we're going, and then the permitting some permitting high level permitting overview and then focus on local and regional experts bar our incredible group of panelists, who are from all throughout California with unique perspectives and information to share with us.

Next slide, please. Again, the conversation today is within the access bubble of this and the Broadband for All. It is really important, through this conversation, through this access conversation that we identify, or local leadership is identified at the local level to help lead this conversation because it is a local and regional effort, while, of course, the State plays a significant role, it is really your local leadership that we want to highlight and talk about today. Thank you for your leadership. Thank you for your participation, because, as we talk about permitting to, you know, to rapidly accelerate broadband infrastructure, it really is your leadership. So, if you haven't already read the action plan, our, the Broadband for All action plan. We'll drop a link in the chat for future reference.

Next slide, please, Luke. Okay, so kind of talking about the people and the access portion of it. How did we get here? This diagram is one that we use is hopefully familiar again to most of you, if not all of you. How did this start? You know, back in 2010, well, we started in California in 2010 but really looking at moving forward, Cole highlighted a little bit of sort of our past work, and where we're moving forward again, this diagram

further identifies the policy that is driving the financial investments at the Federal and State level which is impacting our ability to deploy the Middle Mile Broadband Initiative as well as last mile programs. That's framing it all in context. Now we to deploy it, we're going to need to focus on the permitting aspects of it and how do we make sure that we can move to those blue bubbles on the bottom, where you see the circles where you see the BEAD, enabling middle mile, broadband and tribal connectivity programs those investments from the IIJA and the State absolutely impact our local permitting and local regional planning efforts. It's important that as these investments are being made, our local communities are making certain policy decisions to again reduce the barrier to deployment and your role as a county city planner or broadband engagement person. Your role is very critical in ensuring that we're reducing that barrier to broadband deployment next slide, Luke, please.

While we've touched on this a bit, wanted to make sure that you that we're again we're all lined up on understanding what the goals of the Broadband for All Action plan are most of you are very likely very familiar with it and where we are today, and what we're going to be discussing and permitting impacts all of our action plan initiatives because we need to build the infrastructure to ensure that we can get to goal 3 and really close that digital divide. So, I will take a pause really quick, right there and make sure. thank you, Juliet, drop that in, chat. Okay. just pause right there and jump to the next slide Luke, please. As Cole mentioned, we and our partners have been part of this work for some time, and it's evolved and changed, as you can sort of see at the bottom of this slide you can see that the Revised Action Plan, and just a couple of years ago expanded the partnerships, collaboration and partnerships are inherent in broadband planning. I just came across an article today that I will link in chat about the very nature that communication conversation, while we can make, you know, develop regional local do local efforts and local planning and state planning and federal planning and we've highlighted some here of some of the initiatives that the State of California has been working on. But it's really that local again, local and regional partnerships and collaboration that really are going to make this work moving forward. And so, I'll pause again. There, really, quickly, I do want to again, it was great to see this come through this morning. While we're having our conversation, we are in alignment with what broadband permitting and the impacts of broadband permitting across the country. This is a conversation that everyone's having. So again, thank you for your time to be here today.

Next slide, please, so we can move to our panelists. I will drop, we will be dropping this slide so that we can really see and focus on all of them. We want to make sure that you know who we're have today. Incredible thank you to each and every one of them, not only for being here today, but for their role that they've played over the last many years in broadband planning. I do consider them regional local experts in their areas. I

would encourage, you know, if you are able to keep your cameras off so we can highlight their conversation. Please feel free to drop your chat questions in chat. If there's something specific to each of them. If there's a question that you have for a specific panelist, go ahead and drop it, we'll try to direct them to them. We will be following some, you know, general questions and really looking to them for their expertise. But of course, if there's specific questions that you have for them, please drop them in chat. What I'm going to do, what I'd like to do is I will ask each of you to introduce yourself the type of organization you represent in your role in broadband planning for your organization. So, I will start with, here's the order of you can just pass it to each other. It's going to be Chris, Fred, Linnea, Loreli, Roland, and Trish. So, if you could just pass it to the next person. That would be great. Thank you so much. Chris.

I guess I'm up welcome everyone. My name is Chris Schmidt. I am the Deputy District Director for right away at Caltrans, District which is in San Diego. I've also served as the Digital Equity Manager for the San Diego Association of Governments also here in San Diego, and I've been working on digital divide and broadband coordination for CalTrans for a number of years. I did put my contact information in the chat, so I'll leave it to that and kick it over to Fred.

Thank you, Chris. I'm Fred Luna. I'm with the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments and I'm the director of Project Delivery and Construction, and SBK is the regional agency in Santa Barbara County, and through the leadership of our board we've been taking a forefront on regional broadband implementation. We partnered with our County of Santa Barbara. We do have a grant to do some implementation. So currently, I'm also serving as the lead delivery representative for SBCAG in working with our local agency and member agencies, and I'll hand that over to Linnea.

Good morning, everybody. My name is Linnea Jackson. I'm a member of the Hoopa Valley tribe. The Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation is located in Northern California, in Humboldt County. As you can see from my background. It's highly forested densely rural area. And I'm the general manager of Hoopa Valley Public Utilities District which is a chartered entity of the tribe that was established over 42 years ago. We started implementing our broadband communications and technology division in 2020 and we're happy to be providing current wireless services. And we're facilitating multiple fiber optic broadband buildouts. So, it's a pleasure to be here. Thank you very much, and I'll pass it to Lorelai.

Thank you, Linnea. My name is Loreli Cappel. I'm the Deputy Director of Economic and Community Development for the city of Atascadero. We are small jurisdiction in a rural county of about 30,000. We had a lot of success in teaming with our neighbors in our region Paso Robles to our North and we worked on a broadband strategic plan that

we Co project, managed to the project. My specific role on that was to be project manager, splitting that responsibility with their Economic Development Director in Paso Robles. But working with our task force here in Atascadero, Director Luke Knight, who's also on this webinar and our public works, team and staff, we kind of were the action team to get our strategic plan created our digital equity plan created and now we're in implementation mode. Oh, I get to pass it off to Roland.

Thank you. My name is Roland Oak. I am the planning supervisor here at SCAG for the Technology and Innovation Business unit for those of you don't know what SCAG is, we are a regional planning agency or MPO that represents 197 jurisdictions in SCAG region. You know, as staff, I also serve as the Broadband Program Broadband Program Manager, and I've worked closely with Chris Schmidt, SANDAG and some of the guests here, you know, who represent RCs and local jurisdictions, including State agencies, of course. Some of the projects that we've worked on was, you know more hands on, you know, technical analysis, such as like VMT, the nexus between VMT and reduction and telework we develop, you know, for our local jurisdictions to adopt a broadband resolution. We're currently working on what we call the CPUC's Lada project, where we're trying to find opportunity zones for last mile services within our region, and finally, you know, both Chris and I served as leads for our, for the broadband permit streamlining report, an ordinance which will some of you have already seen like a draft sneak peek of, but it is going to go through an official release tomorrow. Actually, last week, if you take a look at her staff reports so.

Perfect.

Yeah, and oh, and and sorry I will pass it over to Trish.

Thank you, Roland. Thanks everyone. Thanks, Maria and the team for inviting us to participate. I'm Trish Kelly, managing director at Valley Vision, which is a civic leadership organization in the greater Sacramento region. We are the conveners for the California jobs 1st initiative, so that broadband, infrastructure and digital equity and access are very embedded in that, and we also are funded by the CPUC to manage our regions connected capital area broadband consortium. We convene the Capital Region Coalition for digital inclusion. So, we're trying to take a very holistic approach to addressing the digital divide. Permit streamlining is a huge issue for us. We worked with California Emerging Technology Fund to prepare the getting connected resource guide, which is really geared to helping our local governments get ready for the big investments that are coming. We, last week we're have the privilege of participating in the middle mile launch for the corridor segment that's going to go through San Jose to Nevada. So that was very exciting to actually see things in the ground. And we want to make sure that our local jurisdictions are ready. So, thanks for having us.

Thank you, Trish. And again, thank you to each of you. I think I've we've all worked together in different capacities over the years and continue to come back to the permitting conversation and the streamlining of permitting. So, to kick us off and I I might call out on one of you. But the 1st thing we were discussing was, we want to talk about barriers. We all know that we have them, and we want to make sure that you know no one's alone in this and we would love to hear about the greatest presented, what are the permitting barriers that have presented the greatest challenges to broadband deployment in your in your area, your region is, and it could be, anything could be infrastructure related. It could be people related. But what are some of the bigger barriers? does anybody want to jump in? Otherwise, I can call on someone.

I'll just jump right in.

Thank you. Okay.

And then this hopefully, this will spur some conversations. I have to start with the beginning talking about working and being a tribal member. So we are, we're on a different land status, so within the reservation, we have multiple types of properties. There's tribal trust there's allotted, there's fee properties, and each one of those has different jurisdictional issues, different local federal and State agencies that we have to coordinate with, and each of those has a different process, a different form, a different contact, and a different timeframe of things that need to be implemented so just that alone, is a barrier, because, every single property that we cross can change from one foot to the next, depending on the status of that. We also have to deal with

the US Forest Service and US fish and wildlife, and make sure that we are implementing, you know, correct environmental studies and the biological studies, cultural resource impact studies that we need. So, I find that tribal nations have a complex set of things to deal with in multiple jurisdictions. So, I'll just kick the conversation off with that. But that's of the barriers is so many different levels of bureaucracy if you will, and requirements to facilitate projects.

Thank you.

Thank you, Linnea. The 1st thing that pops into my mind is sometimes I think that there's the assumption that this is a rural issue. And it's not. It's also found in urban areas, as we can see in sort of Eastern, the southeastern portions of the State where there's multiple tribal lands as well. So, I really appreciate you highlighting that. Does any, would anybody else like to follow up on Linnea's conference as well? Oh.

I can follow up, this is Roland. One of the key barriers or challenges we found when we were doing our own project was because the lack of knowledge, especially within local jurisdictions. Primary example is, I believe, the FCC has a mandate called the shot clock right where, you know, within 60 days, particularly for wireless infrastructure,

you're supposed to issue out a permit. They were just unaware, right? Or they were aware, and they don't have the resources to execute, you know that that mandate and it's not their fault, you know. It's a resource issue, you know. It's a, it's a knowledge issue and you know, FCC can't go around every city throughout the nation and enforce this right? They're not like the FBI or ATF, or you know what I mean. They're big, but not that big right? And so that caused a lot of not only just frustration amongst ISPs because they want to get their projects going. But you know the staff as well, too. It's just that lack of knowledge, right? Another barrier is the ownership, you know, amongst local jurisdictions like who actually, who actually takes care of this right? You know, usually it's the planning department. When we think of things like plan, check, and whatnot. But again, because every city or county works differently and again tied to resource issues, it could be the city manager's office public works like, who knows? Right? And so that causes confusion, that causes confusion amongst you know, those who are trying to get anything digital divide related going. It's this, it's this I guess, for lack of a better word, lack of transparency, right? So, it's another barrier.

Yeah, I'll piggyback on what Roland said, because, in addition to overall supporting our communities, we're doing a couple of local plans or just working more deeply with some of our jurisdictions. Like we have a small city down in the Delta. The Delta is unique geography with levees and really hard to deploy fiber. So, we're, we've been working with the city for a long time to try to get something, and I think we're about to get a tower, but you know they have to support the land because it's their subsid, subsidence there. So, you know it. And it's a struggle for a lot of small jurisdictions, but also mid size cities, that what you're mentioning, Roland like, where does the decision making and the permit processing, planning authority or just the work process reside because one of our cities that we're working with, has a lot of different touch points. And now that they're facing some bigger deployment projects, the scale also of what they have to permit and move through the process is really beyond the levels of what they're used to. So, we, one example that I shared with Maria was that there's a working with CDT on a fiber hut location, and it's really taken quite a long time to just navigate that process. One department's handling, that another department is handling some other kind of fiber deployment. So, I think there that it's challenging for local governments to as much as we've talked about being ready like, how does that really operationalize? And how do the jurisdictions know some of the updated requirements to pass through?

I can chime in and dovetail off of what Trish just said, because I think we are that jurisdiction that she's speaking of. We had specific things that I think were posing a challenge from a permitting process. Number one, we have a policy that once we've redone our streets, you don't dig them up again for 2 years. So, if a really great project comes in, and you know so it was really interesting to remove that barrier by having

public works work with them to locate fiber in the sidewalk, or, you know, do directional boring, and there's lots of ways around it. But your public works team or your engineers have to be very flexible and creative, and that all comes from your council and the directive that they're getting. If our city's priority is broadband, broadband, get it in the ground at any expense as fast as you can, all of a sudden things become very easy, and we're all of a sudden one team working together in lockstep instead of you know, having them go through the typical process of permitting and on that note encroachment permits. So if a new provider comes in with a master plan of how they want to light up our city, we can have our public works team, now at a subsidized cost, with no fees to them do an encroach a master encroachment permit where they look at the entire project city wide and do it all at once. Now we don't have a ton of staff or a small community, but if it's prioritized because Council says this is our priority action item., our team is on it. There's, like, you know, specifically a group of people that are jumping on it and making sure that the traffic control is approved, pre-approved. Give us one big permit, and we'll blanket the whole city with, and you'll get your encroachment permit. And one last piece we have in place, that was a barrier, was we don't allow new utilities above ground. So, what happens when they come in and want to do some upgrades for Internet, it was a big deal for us, but we were able to say, you know, what if it's existing infrastructure. We're going to go ahead and say, add it. Add it above ground, add it aerial. If it's by, if it's fiber, if it's fiber, do it the way you need to do it to get it done. And when we underground all of the utilities, including electrical and everything, we'll do it all together. So that was just able to not hold things up. So those are the big ones from a city jurisdiction perspective. Before that we've got topography issues that are a barrier we've got in our little rural community. We've got you know, just basically determining what's underserved and unserved in our community because the state process in the past was hey, is this area served? One ISP raises their hand and says, Yeah, we got it, we plan to deploy in the next years, and that wasn't necessarily true. So, it stopped a lot of work just like all of you probably have experienced for years. And now we have data from a gap analysis from our strategic plan that says, that's not necessarily true. This is completely underserved, and there is no plan to get this anytime soon, and we need to do something immediately, so.

Thank you, Loreli. That's great. That actually sort of dovetails in really nicely, with sort of the follow up on sort of what are some key steps which you've already identified. Some key steps that a community or a county or a city or a region can take to help move forward in the development of broadband plan planning, preparation. What are, and I think, sort of narrow it in what are some key steps that maybe, in addition to what Loreli mentioned to help support the increase and the aspects of permitting that sort of we see on the horizon. What are some like, top 3, I don't, I don't, I'm not even sure how to frame it. But what are some key steps some of our communities and counties should be thinking about for those increased permitting applications?

I'll just say one, and that is just dovetailing off what I just said. But educate your decision makers, that's it. If you're a city, and they think this is a priority, and your elected officials are in and their constituents say, this is the most important thing and you have educated your group and said, this is why this is so important. Everything seems to flow from there because it comes from the top, and it comes from the constituents, and as soon as they realize this is a high priority, and they either dedicate funds just for general broadband deployment if they can put some dollars away for it, you're ready. You're ready to strike, and all staff can do is try and keep up with your decision makers directive. So that was my unique experience. But our team was trying to catch up with the fact that fiber one council wanted fiber immediately. And how do we get it. We're just, you know, racing, racing against the clock to get it in the ground, and and it worked well for us.

I'll also jump in, you know. And to attack on Loreli also, educate your community, right? The reality, it, it sounds weird, you know, we we're obviously all using broadband. We all have cell phones, you know, here, but there's still, you know, especially amongst the senior populace. There's still a fear of new technology. We saw this with G technology, right? Like, you know, there's all these, you know, conspiracy theories like one person literally thought it was going to open the portals of hell, right? I mean it. They are out there. It's and it sounds silly. But you still have to consider it, you know, because, it's you need to convince them that this is essential, an essential infrastructure that that not only they need and the future needs, and we saw a clear example when, during the onset of Covid, you know, just an anecdotal story. My parents are members of the church super involved, and when Covid hit, you know the churches all went virtual and they didn't know how to connect to zoom right, or some or some people didn't even have the connection to participate in zoom services. Right? So, and that that is an infrastructure issue. So, things like that, you know you have to tack on a story, you know. Why, why do you need this? Well, here's what you might be losing out on social services, you know bank services. You know, even entertainment, which is super important. Right? It's a stress reliever, things like that. So off definitely, the definitely, the communication aspect, not just the decision makers, but also the people who reside in the in in the city as well. So, you need some sort of baseline foundation, you know. That's, you know, can't just jump into permitting, because let's be real an ordinance can be pretty boring to read. I do this for a living. It's not, it's not. It's not the most fun. Read right? So, you need, you need, you need something that kind of catches attention. What's at stake here? You know what's at stake.

I think another thing that Loreli mentioned is the idea of a team. I think the staff working across departments. It touches so many different things. So having a process where your staff teams are working together to kind of identify sticking points, just share information figure out how to work, then, externally, with people that are going through

a permit process so that you can expedite where you need to, or just make sure that you're aligned on what the, what the process is, and one of our jurisdictions that's facing now a big fiber bill, which is very exciting, but some of their requirements, only let them go through small tranches of permits, and so they're going to be working with an external consultant under contract. The provider will pay for that, but the city chooses who that is, and that's a that's a process that a lot of cities do you know, to hire a firm that specializes in that to help add capacity so that you don't have the bottlenecks. I think those are practical kind of approaches to, to make sure that you can keep things flowing.

I would also like to add to that. So, Roland brought up, you know, lack of resources, right? What are some of those barriers? Smaller communities, smaller tribal entities, the employees are wearing many hats. And so, I think it's great to have like a lead project manager who is keeping on timelines, who's communicating. You need early engagement and consultation with all of those entities. And what's worked for us is to bring a collaborative meeting of all of those entities that aren't used to pairing each other, but at least you're at the same table talking about, you know, what are our project goals here? What are our timelines? What are the requirements? Where's the overlap? And how can we pair that, you know to facilitate this project you talked about educating decision makers and your stakeholders in your community? That is so important. And I think we get so busy with facilitating projects that sometimes that gets left to the wayside. But if you're building Broadband for All this is the goal of that is to serve unserved households, it's to provide that for telemedicine and education and economic development, and all the things that we're doing this for so engaging your community is critical and key and having them not operate in a silo. And so, you know, it's that outreach. It's the communication with agencies that's going to lead to the success of a project.

You all are doing such a great job at segueing into the next question and leading the conversation. And I'm going to, I want to pitch this to you, cause you all touched on sort of that collaboration sort of that general coal-way to build a coalition or way to build capacity. So, then we're the next sort of topic is sort of what are some key strategies in building that coalition or strategic partnership to support regional planning efforts. And Linnea, you said that so perfectly, but I'd also like to take a chance to sort of highlight, Fred, I'm going to pitch this one to you to talk a little bit about the unique approach Santa Barbara County has taken. Sort of again, rural community, rural county sporadic communities. How can they regionally plan, or what are some of the strategies you've taken, and of course everybody feel free to jump in. But I'd love to give hear from Fred first.

Yeah, thank you, Maria. There was a lot of good points made there about educating your community members. I think one of the things in Santa Barbara County we early

found, and really, this came out through our development of our regional broadband strategic plan, where we knew where our focus areas and our top priority areas. And they primarily were in unincorporated areas. And so, even though Santa Barbara Deal, you know, has miles of coastline and lots of areas in the coastal zone, you know, developing kind of a tiered approach as to how we were going to approach our efforts and saying that, looking at those unincorporated rural areas, and so educating folks on what the scope really is for developing the fiber network. And, like Roland was saying earlier, there's a lot of misconceptions out there about what you're going to be doing in their communities, and so do doing that is, through a thorough project description. We've just recently released or going to be releasing a draft programmatic EIR that really describes probably 80% of our initial priority areas that we're going to be implementing and so I think that's very helpful to educate the community members, and, moving forward on that and so and then it'll leverage the ability to kind of expedite specific projects going forward done by our agency, our member agency partners, ISPs. So that's kind of a tool we're hoping that is available to all.

Anybody else have any other sort of key strategies to that coalition building and regional planning concepts.

Sure, so I'll talk about the regional planning perspective. You know. SCAG and SANDAG and SPCAG, and other COGS where MPOs are, you know, in a unique position where, you know, we're kind of in between... we're kind of like liaisons, right? Between, you know, state, federal, and local right? That's kind of our we're smack dab in the middle. And what we've noticed, and not just broadband, but in general. You know, there's always a gap, a policy gap right like you know, the information isn't trickling down to local jurisdictions as effectively as they should be, and this is where you know our agencies have come in and kind of spread the word right. And instead of, you know, just slamming all the Federal rule makings and whatnot, you know, what we try to do is we, condense the information and kind of create a story and and then filter it to our local jurisdictions, and, if needed, have one on one meetings and not just meetings, but you know, when we see like funding opportunities, you know, we notice that look the cities that need broadband the most are the poorest. That's just how it is usually or and again, we have staffing issues. So, this is where you know a COG, an MPO or a CAD can jump in and and let's say, apply for a grant on their behalf, or take on project management roles on their behalf, so you can directly help them out. Kind of alleviate the pressure. And so, you know, and then coalition building of course, you know, we during, you know, when we started, you know, we because we have access to 197 jurisdictions, we had an advantage. And we also have access to RBC's. You guys at the State, we're very proud, you know, we didn't really work closely together until Covid, you know, CDT, CPUC, and so forth, and but we knew we had the resources to connect, and so we both SCAG and SANDAG just threw everything at it.

Let's just bring everyone together, right? Let's just cause that's what we do to begin with. So, building upon, you know, we advanced broadband initiatives, you know, using previous examples of what we did respect to transportation, land use or housing planning, right? So, we had a good template, and I encourage everyone who knows any jurisdiction or agency that has that template to, you know, can't force them, but ask them to take the lead on it, or a greater role, right, to do so, to get it all going.

I don't envy Roland for having hundreds of jurisdictions. So, in our small one, I can speak to the fact that we once you define the problem and know what your strategic plan is identifying as the issue or the gap, and and who needs to be served and what the shortcomings are. It's not just important to engage those people and say we need help. We need, I think, what you need to do, especially if you're going to a nonprofit like, for example, our Chamber of Commerce or our homeless services to help get those folks, you know connected to, you know, digital resources. I think the most important thing is to understand what their priorities are. As government, we can't just come in and say, "Hey, we've got this new project, this is a priority to our council - it should be yours, too." We just say, "Hey, I understand, you have a job search center in your homeless shelter now, and what we'd like to do is collaborate on a project that we think can help both of our missions move forward." What if we had a digital navigator in your in house, in your you know, in your home shelter that is not that is stationed at your job search center that's not just helping them find the jobs but helping them understand how to navigate the Internet and get connected. Now that we have fiber in the ground, or "Hey, Chamber of Commerce, I see that you have a strategic action that says you want to help get businesses online for free because they don't all have their own websites. What if we were to train or partner in using that staff member in the future years to also be a digital navigator to help. You know, all of the businesses that are not necessarily technical, technically savvy, connect to, you know, connect to the Internet." And so, then it's the digital equity piece of it. So, when we move forward, that's a really big piece of our success, so far, we're not there yet, but we're getting there, and I think that's been helpful. You don't just come in and tell them "We're government, we're here to help," you say, "how can we help you? I think we have some common goals".

Been on Davis Parks.

Question. Okay?

Sorry because we're not... the tribes aren't a small city, right? We're a sovereign tribal nation, but we, we dealt with the same issue as far as having we didn't have the policies. We didn't have the staffing resources that we needed. The only thing that's helped us really is funding opportunities such as the California Public Utilities Commission. I think it was Fred that mentioned, or maybe Roland, that we all also

have a ladder grant that helps support business services. They did have tribal technical assistance, because what you're needing is capacity building funding. And maybe you're starting from that planning component. But it has to start with the needs assessment. You know, a survey of what those goals are. What is your future development look like? Even if you don't have the construction or engineering plans, it starts with that baseline foundation study. And you know, hopefully, there's some, you know, capacity building funding that could help spark, that to develop those foundational studies. Thanks.

I could jump in.

Thank you for jumping in on that one. I wanted to make sure Trish was, and I think these may tie together, Trish. I'm thinking from your previous comment, or into Davis's question, did you want to jump in and...

Oh, thanks, Maria. Well, it's actually tagging on to about what Linnea mentioned with the local area technical assistance grants. Some of our jurisdictions received those they were really helpful because they gave them that next level and depth of planning capacity. For instance, the city of Sacramento did a really great plan, and then they it positioned them to get funding from the Federal funding account and they were able to use that planning process to identify the priority areas, and they're spread all over the city. But they have a much more informed way to approach what they're going to do. And but they were able to look at their own planning processes to do that. And I think that that Grant program was really valuable for helping the jurisdictions get ready and would really benefit some of those smaller and mid size cities. So, I hope that the State can try to find a way to find a funding source for that, because that's a level of depth that you can go into that we can't do it more broadly at the consortia, but we can help facilitate that. And we've tried to help out some of our jurisdictions look for other funding sources, too, like the economic development administration I know call had used some of that over in the Central Sierra. So, looking more expansively at other resources that we can bring in to help our local communities get ready. And I think another area and a partnership is working with not only our councils of government, but our utilities, because they're going to need to be partners in the deployment, too, and they've mentioned things to us like some of the applicants for the use of, though those polls and infrastructure don't always know the processes, either, like what's a good way to submit an application. So, there's a lot of practical things that I think, that we can all work on together and sharing and hearing examples of you know where it's working and how we can help replicate or scale some of those practices. And this kind of webinar process is valuable. We've done training on that getting connected resource guide or just information sharing with CSAC, The League, Chico State, the California Association for Local Economic Development. So, we've tried to use a lot of avenues to reach our local jurisdictions too.

Yeah, can I? Can I jump in? Well, regarding the ordinance, well, we I know we're kind of plugging it in. But we did develop one, so you guys are more than welcome to use it as a template. You know it might, it may have it. We found that it may be of mixed value. There are cities with well established practices, and you know, if that's the case, just keep going right assuming it's quick, you know. But for those who don't have an ordinance well, there's a solid foundation. However, there's also now the issue, even if you have the ordinance, and we've already mentioned that there's the staffing and resources capacity. And so, this is where you kind of need to assuming, you know, in our report. We didn't assume that extra funding sources were available, right? We kind of built in constraints, because that's just typically how the world works. And it'd be great, of course, if the State, you know, provided resources. But in the event that there are no resources, there are some, you know, creative solutions to help the staffing needs. I'm not asking, Fred, I'm not asking you to take on more work. I certainly don't want to take on more work, and we have, if we have members of the COG, I don't want. I'm not. I'm not. Yeah, I mean, but you could possibly leverage a COG. Remember, COGs are like sub regional. They are also represented by their elected officials, and when it comes to jurisdictional authority it becomes a contentious issue, right? We don't. We, you know, cities want to control what is being developed. But you know there's a lot of commonalities between neighboring cities as well, too. A clear example is, you know, the northern portion of the San Gabriel Valley, where you can't even tell if you are going from Pasadena to Monrovia, Sarah Madre, and so forth, right? They all seem like one city. So, you're finding you're finding some consistency here. So, you have some core values, especially when it comes to beautification, aesthetics, and so forth. That's a great opportunity for either of them to use, you know, the San Gabriel Valley COG or form a JPA of their own right to share resources and to allocate those resources in hiring, possibly consultant or full-time staff member to issue out permits within, you know, all those communities, right? Killing, you know, multiple birds with one stone. That's potential solution, you know. I don't know if it's been done. But we do note that in our report, you know, consider it right sometimes, staffing, you know, hiring a dedicated person. It's not always the best solution. Sometimes a consultant is better right because you don't have to pay, you know, benefits, retirement and so forth. So, you know you got to do kind of a cost, you know a cost analysis on that. Well, who is better? You could probably share the consultant as well, too, you know, enter into MOUs with neighboring cities as well, too. So, everyone kicks in. If you want to let's, say you got to pay the guy $150,000. Well, everyone kicks in like 20 grand. That's a lot more affordable because you have this, you know, because you're not issuing out a thousand permits a day, right? So, the workload can be consistent but for a city that only has 2 people to do this, even one or two permits is too much for them. And so again, can you? Can. You kind of alleviate the pressure, using the most cost, effective ways. Just some potential solutions, not saying you need to do this, but

it is an idea worth considering. I don't want to do it, so, please. No. NPOs are not the ones that should do it, but, you know, form a JPA. Use your COGs if they're willing. And if the elected are willing to cede some sort of, you know, planning authority to them. Right? That that is, of course, the tricky ones. Yeah.

Roland, thank you!

Yeah, maybe I'll jump in a little.

Yeah, go ahead, Fred.

Okay, yeah, just really quickly. I think those are great points. So, Santa Barbara is a single county MPO, but we do, I think our experience in at SBK is knowing because we act in a on a regional level, for, like as the local transportation authority, as well. So, knowing what's common and what's really different about our member agencies and, so the points that Roland made about, there are certain things, maybe county wide, that there's some commonalities that we can reach ground on. But also, we have to know the differences. And so, I think we did agree to form a joint powers authority. There was a lot of momentum at the SBK level to have SBK act as the JPA, but also retain that local control at the local level for permitting, and so independent, because each city is unique and different. And they have their own policies. And some of them on the south coast, are in the coastal zone, and so they have their special processes that would be required. Initially, most of our projects are outside of those areas in in county areas. So, working with closely with the county of Santa Barbara, they've formed their own working group of functional leaders. I think somebody else mentioned that previously as a good strategy, just to get all their departments involved. And so that's kind of our current focus. But trying to play that long game, just knowing we're going to be hearing it for a long time, and just, establishing what's next, and and those planning priorities, and and following up on them.

Thank you. Thank you, all of you, that again, we're going to segway sort of into the next aspect of this. But yeah, you know, how do you build that? You've all touched really nicely on how you kind of increase that local capacity, you know, even a city or a county, you, you increase that capacity, what it sounds like, through partnership, MOUs, coalition building, JPAs, you know, working groups. Thinking about specific policy considerations, and you know again. You've most of you have touched on this as well. What, you know, for these smaller jurisdictions sort of followed up on Davis's question, you know, prioritizing policy considerations for permit planning staff like, if you had to prioritize a decision, to address the increase in permitting, you know? Was it dig once? Is it fees? Is it prioritizing public works, and permit, you know, and planning coordination like from a policy consideration? What are some things that that cities and counties could be thinking about?

I think we could start with if your council is aligned, and they can give you the directive subsidized fees for encroachment permits. I mean, if you can afford to, as a city without going putting yourself in, you know financial trouble. Waive those fees for encroachment permits. Waive those fees for you know, doing the engineering to look looking at underground and utilities. I know that's not easy for everyone, but if Council's Directive is that, and they're willing to, you know, keep up with the times and and be competitive, and fight for those ISPs to come to your community. If you're known as Broadband friendly, they will come. So how do you start that you educate your people who vote for the you know, for our elected officials? You educate your elected officials. They put money and a directive to Staff towards that, and you propose a staff. Well, if you really mean this, let's put our money where our mouth is, and we'll, we should be waiving fees for all of these things. There are also very simple things like micro trenching. I know people talk about it, and it's a buzz. It doesn't work necessarily for us as easily as other people like, because we're not necessarily trenching and digging deep in our in our streets. So, it doesn't really matter. We're just doing minor resurfacing. But those are things that are absolutely okay. And all it takes is our city engineer to say, "Yeah, I've looked into it, and I approve." So again, as long as it's not digging up a street that was just freshly refinished, resurfaced, and repaved. I say, go for it. Otherwise let's figure out a way to get you through the sidewalk without you know, destroying our new public works project. So those are the things I would say, it all comes down to be easy. Be quick, be nimble, you know, wave fees wherever you can, and I think you can start with encroachment permits, and subsidizing those fees.

So, I'm going to have a completely different perspective. Only because of the structure, right? So, throughout California, you know, there's 109 Federally recognized tribes. Some State recognized as well. So, we, as a tribal government, as a tribal entity, are, you know, facilitating the project we're building out the project. We're working with the entities for that permitting. So, for instance, like a Pole attachment agreement, where we are negotiating with the local people. I think the CPUC, and other regulatory bodies are going to have to create a structure for tribal nations because we don't fit the ISP or the CLEC model, and they're really going to have to carve out what that looks like. As you know, permitting is happening. Planning grants are happening, build out and facilitation, whether that's you know, a tribally owned wisp or fiber provider, or if they're working with incumbents. That has to be figured out from a State and policy level. So, I would kind of urge, you know, State, State and Federal leadership to really be thinking about that, because there are so many tribes located throughout various regions of the State.

The other factor, I think we we've heard is the time component. Some cities have layers of different committees where things have to go to. So, I think, Loreli, like talked about that maybe establishing, you know, standard scopes that you're that people are

buying that have preapprovals. Perhaps that can be, you know, signed off by city engineers. We're not there yet at the at a county level, but I think it's a conversation that we're having, you know, it's like, how does this leverage back into our individual cities? And how do they really want to expedite that? You know, the buy in at that local level, you know some are more ambitious than others to take that on.

I think in some of our jurisdictions we have seen the policy commitment at the leadership level, but when it gets down into the departments, there can be a fragmentation around who's making a decision. We had an example recently with one of our jurisdictions where decision was made for trenching that's a lot deeper than the norm, and just trying to understand that process. You know, and and a lot of jurisdictions don't even know completely what's in the ground, or where the utilities are the various kind of things. So, you know, building that knowledge and capacity is important, but I think again, for me, it goes back to having that coordination among the interdepartmental, too, so that you can share, and people feel supported, but work on getting these expedited processes in place, because otherwise it's going to take us years and years to deploy, and we've got last mile coming now with the FFA. And then we've got to get ready for BEAD. So how do we really help our jurisdictions get ready? And I think the role the State has a role to play, to support the jurisdictions with that, too, and the best practices side, you know, things like the EIRs is really helpful - these kinds of practical tools.

Thank you, Trish, for touching on that point. Because again, part of what's driving these conversations. Well, you know, at the State local federal level is this funding. Some of these fundings have timeline commitments on them whether they have to be committed under contract deployed by I see Chris shaking his head. Yes, so it's, you know, we can't really afford potentially to not have some of these items addressed. Chris, would you like to jump in on that.

Yeah, I want to jump in on that. Specifically, I think you know a lot of the sentiment that we're expressing here is to be friendly, to be approachable and to be supportive of the private industry investments that are being made, and traditionally, we viewed all of these investments as private sector investments. And frankly, they're trying to make money, and they're trying to serve customers. And there's often been an adversarial relationship between the private sector providers and the public servants that are trying to do good by the community. Things like, please don't tear up my road after we just repaved it. You know, please be responsible in terms of the way you backfill the trench that you cut through the road. We, as the, you know, municipal employees, don't want to basically have to respond to council inquiries and citizen complaints about how you did or didn't do the work in the community, or hear about complaints about the quality of your service. Whether they're too expensive or whether service is being interrupted and things like that. Now that's the way things used to be, and what I would like to offer

is that the industry is much more sensitive to these kinds of concerns and is much more willing to be at the table to talk with your communities, to better inform and explain how they do what they do. And then, to Maria's point, we are now actually going to invest public money in this last mile and middle mile infrastructure. So, this is no longer just private sector investment. It really is public sector money that is going into these, you know, very needy communities, because by definition they're underserved. And really, we ought to make that buck go as far as it possibly can. And the biggest, best way to do that is to spend it quickly. Believe it or not, because time value of money is huge here. It's both very important for the private industry partners, but also just the fact that things are getting more expensive all the time, just the nature of it. and while it's taking longer, the very community that needs to be served is waiting. You know, school children are still not getting the connectivity they want. We're still not doing those virtual medical appointments. You know, we're not being able to work from home and take care of our children. Things like that. Those are the real impacts, the stuff that happens at the planning counter at the permitting counter is a necessary step to get to the final outcome. And that's the better connectivity. And if we keep that prize in mind, we're going to always be better served. You know, Caltrans has instituted lots of things to make that better. E-permitting is one which is quite frankly, not something every jurisdiction can do, but it's made our process a lot more transparent, much more accountable. So now people can see why their application is being rejected or has comments on it. And we're trying to hold ourselves to issuing permits within days. So those are key things, because money is one thing, you know, in terms of permitting fees and waiving things, and all of that. But the foundational part is, can we effectively work together? Is there a transparency? Is there an understandable process? And I think if we have a positive attitude about that. and I'll just paraphrase what my city of San Diego said, we want to be friendly to the private industry that's investing in our communities, because ultimately it is serving our citizens. No public agency is really in a position to provide these services to the citizens. It has to be a partnership with the private entities that are doing so, and the more business friendly those communities are, the more likely the investments are going to be made right. And I think we just need to kind of come to some sort of an understanding about that. And permitting is really the key touch point. And it happens with the with the interactions, the personal interactions right there at the permitting counter right between the private sector consultant, that is often the permit runner and the person behind the counter receiving that application, and if they can get along with each other and make nice, it's all going to go a lot smoother.

Chris. That was perfect. It's a great way to sort of pull it together. I'm looking at time, and I'm we probably could go on for a very long time. This has been so fascinating a really great conversation. I'd like to have each of you said any final thoughts or

considerations, as we sort of look towards wrapping this up. But, Trish, I see you're unmuted. And thank you again, Chris. Those were great comments.

Yeah, piggybacking on what Chris said. It's the interface. It's the person at the counter. It's the process. This has been a standard of practice for other kinds of infrastructure and development projects is some cities or counties have the idea of an Ombudsperson, where you, for especially for bigger projects that are really high priority. You assign someone to help people navigate that process, too. And it really signals that that it's priority. And you can do very much real time feedback like, Chris was saying. The transparency. You know where your sticking points are. You can get ahead of the curve, and you cut the time to the project. Time is really the currency, you know, but it it's also becomes more of a partnership to help bring a project to fruition and help the applicant address the issues that they need to address, and it saves jurisdictions money, too, in the end.

I don't know if this is closing comments, but I just want to say, you know, it really kind of takes a collaborative approach. You know, it's not going to just be one entity, right? That's facilitating all of these different things. You know, it's environmental. It's the different, you know, encroachment permits. It's the biological resources that need to be completed. So, having a collaborative approach being at the table, learning to work together, learning to streamline processes for the betterment so we can achieve, you know, this lofty goal of 10,000 miles, give or take, plus last mile build out, plus the digital equity and the engagement and education. So that's a that's a really lofty goal. And you know, we're going to have to all work together to achieve these things.

Thank you.

My comment would be that would be just to understand that there's these projects can take a long time sometimes, and I know balancing patience with you know the timeline is often something that, you know at least my board is very sympathetic to, and I think and but, you know, wanting to meet the community's needs is always all our goals. And so, but I think just taking those opportunities at every step of the way, and you know, having a plan and getting projects ready, you know, even if it means just, you know, smaller chunks of time, and looking for those funding opportunities and and collaborating on those.

Any other final thoughts from our other panelists.

Use our ordinance. Shameless pitch.

Well again, but that ties us into the very next portion. Thank you again, all of our all of the panelists. We're going to pop the slides up again, that actually rolling ties in directly to the Broadband for All portal and highlighting and rolling when the ordinance is public, would love to possibly pop that up there as a resource. We've been working to

keep the Broadband for All portal updated. Here's under the partners, and we'll drop the link to the portal for those of you that maybe haven't used it as much. We've been taking a really hard look at cultivating resources for you. Next slide, please. And I've just provided some very high-level examples. In one of the 1st slides the permitting playbook that was a collaborative endeavor by multiple agencies that is linked there. Trish Kelly mentioned CETF. There's a lot right there that local getting connected a resource guide. There's ordinance to, not ordinance sorry, there's dig once templates. There's other sort of templates or opportunities really would like to also highlight the Federal resources available. Again, when you go to the portal, the Feds have done an outstanding job again, with the BEAD coming and a lot of the understanding around NEPA, and we have SEPA compliance. There is a list of resources from, you know, really cultivated from 2023 and 2024, this NTIA local permitting importance challenges and strategies is there for you. That's a way to build local capacity - is by utilizing things that have already been made available and not needing to reinvent the wheel. There's been a lot of great work done, so highly recommend if you look at the Broadband for All portal you can, this is just again, high level examples. And with that I'm going to again say, thank you to our panelists. Thank you to all of the attendees. Please work with your local jurisdictions, as you are able to also increase your capacity, and I'm going to pass it over again to Joleah. Co-host, co-lead, helping put this together with some final words for us.

Well, what a wonderful round table! Thank you so much for Maria for putting this together. Awesome job. Thank you all for joining us today. We really appreciate you coming to the Round Table. We appreciate, appreciate the panelists and such A lively discussion and just such valuable information that was provided today. So, we hope that that information was helpful. The slides will be sent out to all shortly after the meeting. The recording will also be made available on the Broadband for All portal. We're also oh, Maria just dropped the broadband readiness survey in the chat. So, if you are able to please take a couple of minutes to go ahead and take that survey. But thank you all. We hope that you enjoy the rest of your day, and we appreciate your time.

Yeah. Thanks, Joleah. Thank you, everybody. Appreciate you attending today.