

## Broadband Comprehensive Planning

A fundamental local government responsibility is planning. Since 1989, each community has been required to submit a comprehensive plan to the state every 5 years. Comprehensive plans encourage community vision and guide growth, including strategies related to community character and quality of life, land use and property rights, and economic development. Per legislation, DCA planning rules were amended to require a broadband element in each community's comprehensive plan. This requirement is intended to ensure that communities consider broadband service and community needs, and that they adopt strategies to promote broadband in their community. DCA has and will continue to communicate this new requirement through its 12 Regional Commission partners, Community Planning Institutes, and other regular interactions with local communities across the state.

## Broadband Model Ordinance

To assist local governments with the process of developing a useful local ordinance to encourage broadband investment and expansion, GBDI worked in collaboration with local governments and providers to develop a model ordinance. The purpose of the model ordinance is to demonstrate that the local government has taken steps to reduce obstacles to broadband deployment. The model ordinance is available on the GBDI website ( [Model Ordinance](#)) and has already been adopted by several communities.

## Broadband Ready Designations: Communities and Sites

A local government that has amended their comprehensive plan to meet DCA requirements and have adopted a model ordinance (DCA version or a version approved by DCA) is eligible to apply for a Broadband Ready Community or Broadband Ready Community Site designation. The purpose of broadband ready designations for communities and sites is to show a local unit of government has taken steps to reduce obstacles to broadband infrastructure investment. The Broadband Ready Community designation information has been posted on DCA's website ([Designations](#)).

## Technical Support and Advisory Services

In addition to the coordinating among state agencies and broadband providers, GBDI is working closely with USDA and other federal entities to access all available resources to aid unserved Georgians. In December 2018, USDA announced its ReConnect Program, with an initial \$600 million in grant and loan funds for rural broadband. USDA's Jannine Miller presented to the Stakeholder Advisory Council about this program, and GBDI has worked with several active deployment projects to encourage and facilitate USDA funding applications.

In April, Governor Brian Kemp sent a letter to USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue reiterating the state's commitment to rural broadband and to ensure the state will do all that we are able to facilitate investment in serving the unserved. This letter of support highlights 3 important steps – including the publication of this Broadband Plan – which enable Georgia applicants to claim 20 scoring points on the USDA application.