

Presentation Excerpt

A BROADBAND PLAN FOR SMALL CITIES AND TOWNS

An excerpt from a presentation by Blair Levin for the Benton Foundation.

This magazine has discussed the idea that small cities and towns can be “global cities” that attract entrepreneurs and start-ups **IF** they have broadband internet service. This article emphasizes that point, and suggests that towns prepare a **Brandband Plan** to either add or maintain this service as a “common” asset of the community. The full version of is presentation is an exciting and insightful discussion of the opportunities, and actually the need, for small cities and towns to connect to global systems.

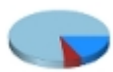
Economic development featuring jobs and family incomes + taxes and fees are in the balance. Mr. Levin’s discussion should inspire every small city and town to consider the possibilities. The excerpts below are generally verbatim with some editing for syntax.

Source: <https://www.benton.org/blog/city-broadband-plans-one-vision-four-markets-four-issues>



Benton Foundation

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City Broadband Plans: One Vision, Four Markets, Four Issues

Submitted by Benton Foundation on behalf of Blair Levin on September 11, 2015 - 4:04pm
You’re reading the Benton Foundation’s Weekly Round-up. This week, Blair Levin on the need for cities to have broadband plans. The round-up is delivered via e-mail each Friday; to get your own copy, subscribe at www.benton.org/user/register

Every city needs its own broadband plan

It is a pleasure to be back with you.

My message today is simple: *every city needs its own broadband plan.*

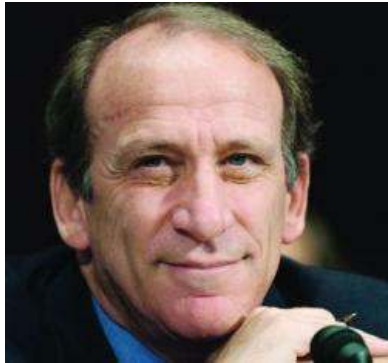
When we did the national broadband plan we were about the 20th country to write one. Now, nearly 150 countries have. A plan has become table stakes for countries wanting to participate in the 21st Century Information Economy.

The **vision** is ubiquitous, affordable, abundant bandwidth, with everyone on and using the platform to improve public services. With cities, we’re where we were with countries in 2010. Several dozen have done them. They’ve been productive for those pioneers. But now, such a plan is becoming table stakes for any city that wants its residents to be part of the 21st Century Information Economy.

Today I will address three questions:

- **First, why do cities need a broadband plan?**
- **Second, given today’s market, how should different cities approach their planning effort?**
- **Third, what issues should a plan address?**

Presentation Excerpt



Blair Levin

“How is that Starkville, Mississippi, has two gigabit providers and you have none?”

“Cities now have many potential allies and a map for how to proceed.”

First, why do cities need a broadband plan? There are three irrefutable truths that lead one to the inescapable conclusion.

- First, the core mission of cities is to create and maintain the commons; something, generally a facility, shared by all, supported by all, that serves the common good.
- Second, market forces alone never create and maintain the commons.
- Third, the most important new commons to develop in our era is the broadband ecosystem of networks, devices, applications and people who know how to use them.

Second, given today’s market, how should different cities approach their planning effort? A country cannot pull one country’s plan off the shelf, do an auto replace of one country’s name with its own, and have a plan. Different countries start from different positions...So it is with cities. One set of communities [one of the four markets needing a broadband plan] are those smaller communities that may not attract a Google or have the scale to attract what L.A. has done, they still can attract private capital to accelerate next generation deployments.

Third, what issues should a plan address? They are different as the counties are different but the vision is the same: ubiquitous, affordable, abundant bandwidth, with everyone on and using the platform to improve public services. Achieving that vision involves four strategies:

1. Drive fiber deeper;
2. Use spectrum more efficiently;
3. Get everyone on; and
4. Create applications and re-imagine government processes to use the platform to improve the delivery of public goods and services.

That same vision and those four strategies apply to cities, but the tactics for achieving that vision are very different, both from the tactics countries use and between cities. The big opportunity for everyone in this room is to get your city to plan on how it will create the 21st Century commons, by assuring that everyone has access to that faster, better, cheaper bandwidth that will be the table stakes for where people want to live and work in the Gigabit era.

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Source: <https://www.benton.org/>