Does your city need to build its own fiber network?

6 reasons to partner with an established fiber provider

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The city of Fort Collins, Colo., is estimating eight years for their fiber buildout from initial project kickoff to completion.

Communities around the country have been working hard to promote economic growth and opportunities, and recruit businesses and citizens to their digitally progressive community. With digital proliferation accompanied by ever-increasing demand for bandwidth, it's no wonder cities around the country are working to establish gigabit Internet in their communities and to promote themselves as a Gig city. And if transforming a smart city is also in your sights, a powerful fiber infrastructure would further your IoT strategy and increase momentum to serve citizens craving ubiquitous digital integration.

So how does one become a Gig city? Many would say the strategy calls for the city to build its own fiber infrastructure and become an Internet Service Provider (ISP) themselves. After all, cities are already providing other utilities like water and electricity, and Internet could certainly become the next utility they manage.

This strategy isn't all wrong. But few cities around the country are prospering from their municipal-owned networks. Only 20 of the 88 municipal broadband projects report the financial results of their broadband operations separately from their electric power operations. Of those 20, only two generated enough cash flow to be on track to pay off debt incurred by the broadband operations within 30-40 years, the estimated useful life of a broadband network. The rest either incurred negative cash flow or will take more than 60 years to break even.[1] While many cities created buzz, like Chattanooga, Tenn., and the Utah Telecommunication Open Infrastructure Agency (UTOPIA) consortium, their success remains to be seen, along with many other examples of failed municipal broadband projects. Even Google Fiber has backed down from its fiber expansion efforts after costly investments and is considering alternatives that do not require them to build a full network.[2]

There's no question that you need a reliable, robust fiber infrastructure to offer to business constituents and build out your Gig or smart city initiatives. You just don't need to do it alone.

Here are 6 reasons to partner with an established fiber provider

1. Faster time to market
You need connectivity now. By 2021, the number of connected devices per person in North America is expected to grow to 13,[3] exponentially increasing the demand on your network. How long are citizens and businesses willing to wait for your network to be built? Let's look an example of a city in the middle of this project today. Fort Collins, Colo., kicked off their broadband program 2014 with their Budgeting for Outcomes process for the 2015-2016 year. From initial budget requests to citizen education — aimed to build support for the bond — to four years of design and buildout after bond issuance, it will be at least eight years before they complete their fiber buildout.[4]

If you live in a Spectrum Enterprise serviceable area, you already have a fiber provider who is ready to provide Gig service now. And when comparing timeframes, Spectrum Enterprise can provide service to a building within 30 to 120 days depending on whether fiber is already on-premises or we are building it (and in many cases, covering the construction cost) within our serviceable area.[5] Certainly this would meet the needs of your business constituents faster than starting from scratch.

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Spectrum Enterprise has invested more than $2 billion to increase density in our national fiber network. In fact, we're adding more than 50 fiber-lit buildings every single day.

2. More expert resources

Redundant, reliable fiber networks are complex, and government resources are strained. And with more than half of the states in the U.S. downsizing state owned and operated data centers and expanding outsourcing,[6] the trend is moving toward managed services so CIOs can focus on other strategic business initiatives. Who will not only build, but then run your network, installation, planning, maintenance and project and capacity management — and what are their qualifications?

The good news is you can leverage the expertise of your local fiber provider whose business is to successfully manage complex, high performing fiber networks. Rather than hire contractors or organically build your own teams, rely on a partner with more MEF-certified professionals than any other service provider,[7] and whose expertise includes more than 20 years of experience supporting large enterprises.

3. Higher network availability

Your network goes down at 4 a.m. on Thanksgiving. Who will answer the phone, troubleshoot and potentially go out and fix the issue?

With a 99.99 percent network uptime guarantee and four-hour mean time to restore (MTTR) not just respond, you'd be covered with the Spectrum Enterprise service level agreements and 24/7/365 network operating center (NOC), already existing today. Plus local technicians and government-dedicated account teams will remain in personal contact with you until your issue is resolved. Go back to sleep knowing your network is in expert hands.

4. Automated network expansion

Your network is built, but — good news — your city is still growing. How will you support growth in network demand and expansion to keep up with your booming metropolis and increase citizen satisfaction?

Spectrum Enterprise has invested more than $2 billion to increase density in our national fiber network and deploy new tools and resources. In fact, we're adding more than 50 fiber-lit buildings every single day to our national network.[8]

5. Superior client experience

Your customers are calling. Billing questions, service issues, product inquiries — how will you service and manage your customer accounts to satisfaction? To better support clients like you, Spectrum Enterprise is significantly transforming the way our employees approach and prioritize the client experience. Led by our Client Experience team, we're deploying new tools, processes and resources to better understand and re-imagine client interactions. Leveraging experience design, through client surveys, data analytics and qualitative research, we are tracking, assessing and measuring emotion, expectation and behavior throughout the entire client journey for continuous improvement towards an effortless client experience. Plus you'll enjoy local, dedicated government client account support from an experienced service team. And for increased visibility into your network performance, the client experience portal offers the ability to explore your network anytime, anywhere.

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6. Lower cost
Government budgets are tight and taxpayer money must be spent wisely. Where will the capital and operating expenses come from to build, maintain and expand your fiber network? What other taxpayer services may be deprioritized to pay for the fiber build, not to mention funding the activities to drum up support for such an initiative?

Use the capital you have for more mission-critical initiatives to support the city's core issues. And decrease expenses with the Spectrum Enterprise competitive, flat-rate pricing — regardless of circuit distance. You're invited to build a fiber program with a strategic, consultative partnership that can be flexible to meet the needs of you and your constituents.

Make the smart choice in becoming a smarter Gig city
You've got enough municipal demands from your constituents. Lean on your local, expert fiber resources at Spectrum Enterprise to take your city into the future.

Learn more.

1 https://www.law.upenn.edu/live/files/6611-report-municipal-fiber-in-the-united-states-an
2 https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/26/technology/google-curbs-expansion-of-fiber-optic-network-cutting-jobs.html
3 https://www.mediapost.com/publications/article/302663/north-american-consumers-to-have-13-connected-devi.html
4 https://www.fcgov.com/broadband/background.php
5 Based on standard installation intervals for buildings on or near-net, within Spectrum Enterprise serviceable footprint. Installation timeframe is an estimate and not guaranteed.
6 NASCIO 2017 State CIO Survey, A New Engine: Driving Innovation in State Technology
7 "MEF Services Certification Registry," MEF.net, (accessed March 5, 2019).
8 https://www.lightreading.com/business-employment/customer-experience/bce-2018-keynote-spectrum-enterprises-phil-meeks/v/d-id/743398

About Spectrum Enterprise

Spectrum Enterprise, a part of Charter Communications, Inc., is a national provider of scalable, fiber technology solutions serving America's largest businesses and communications service providers. The broad Spectrum Enterprise portfolio includes networking and managed services solutions: Internet access, Ethernet access and networks, Voice and TV solutions. Spectrum Enterprise's industry-leading team of experts works closely with clients to achieve greater business success by providing solutions designed to meet their evolving needs. More information about Spectrum Enterprise can be found at enterprise.spectrum.com.

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