

September 27, 2018

Service Alberta Provides Provincial Broadband Strategy Update

The Ministry continues to develop options for a broadband strategy

In response to the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission identifying [new target broadband speeds](#) (50 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload), Service Alberta began work in 2017 on developing options for a Provincial Broadband Strategy to support province-wide progress on improving broadband services.

To date, most of Service Alberta's work has focused on understanding the state of connectivity in Alberta, which included an information-gathering survey sent to all municipalities earlier in 2018, as well as a review of advertised connection speeds in all communities across Alberta in order to develop a baseline understanding of current speeds in the province and how they compare to the CRTC targets; and developing initial options for a provincial strategy. According to data gathered by Taylor Warwick Consulting and provided to Service Alberta, only 12.7% of communities in the province have service options that meet the CRTC target speeds, although 65% of Albertans live in these communities (not including Edmonton and Calgary; when Edmonton and Calgary are included, over 83% of Albertans meet the target speeds). This data supports the commonly-held assumption that those in Alberta's small communities and rural areas have the poorest broadband connection speeds.

In addition to developing an improved understanding of what levels of service were available across the province, Service Alberta has used stakeholder surveys and interviews to better understand the most common barriers to improving broadband services in rural areas, as well as the impacts of poor service.

Based on the information gathered to this point and ongoing stakeholder conversations, Service Alberta staff will be providing policy recommendations to the Minister in late 2018. The recommendations will seek to:

- Identify measurable targets for broadband speeds
- Close the urban-rural divide in access to broadband speeds
- Work towards ensuring all Albertans have access to high-quality, reliable and affordable broadband services
- Accelerate Alberta's ability to participate in the global knowledge-based economy and take advantage of emerging digital innovation opportunities

Should this approach, and requested provincial funds, be approved, planning for implementation and funding of the strategy will begin in 2019.

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