

# PASSIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

Wires, cables, and municipal considerations



## PASSIVE INFRASTRUCTURE SHARING

The business of telecommunications falls under federal jurisdiction but many of the practical considerations relating to the physical installation of telecommunications infrastructure come under the authority of local governments. Connectivity deployment relies on access to existing civil infrastructure such as roadways, utility poles, streetlights, underground conduits, and potentially any physical structure where cables and wireless antennas can be attached. The telecommunications industry commonly refers to these supporting structures as “passive infrastructure.”

Under the *Telecommunications Act*, carriers have a right to access passive infrastructure on municipal rights of way (ROW) and "other public spaces" to deploy their network. At the same time, the Act states that carriers can only access ROW and other public places with the consent of the municipality. Municipalities are prevented from refusing access to carriers, but they can dictate reasonable terms of access to their ROW through the conditions of their consent.

## LOCAL PLANNING & POLICY TOOLS

Local policies and procedures regarding passive infrastructure can influence connectivity deployment, in the same way that policies, procedures and permits are used to influence and encourage land development.

Connectivity-friendly policies are relatively inexpensive ways to integrate connectivity infrastructure planning into other civil infrastructure planning. Over time, these measures can create the conditions to reduce service delivery costs and attract new investments in service upgrades and expansions.

## NEXT STEPS TO CONNECTIVITY

Adopting digital best practices and guidelines can help reduce barriers to connectivity development, such as comprehensive municipal access agreements and building permits which require digital pathways in new sewer, roadway and buildings, while safeguarding the interests of the municipality.

---

### CREATE AN INVENTORY OF CARRIERS OCCUPYING RIGHTS OF WAY

An important first step is to compile a complete list of telecommunications companies operating within your municipality and, to the extent possible, the physical location of each of their assets.

---

### NEGOTIATE A MUNICIPAL ACCESS AGREEMENT (MAA)

MAAs establish the terms and conditions under which municipalities permit carriers to construct, maintain, and operate transmission installations on or in municipal property. They serve to protect local taxpayers by ensuring direct and indirect costs are not transferred to the municipality (e.g. pavement degradation, liabilities, etc.).

---

### ADOPT A DIG ONCE POLICY

Dig Once policies attempt to lower the cost of future broadband deployment by requiring that fibre conduits are installed at the same time other municipal infrastructure (road, water and sewer) projects are undertaken.

For more information on connectivity in BC, visit our [website](#) or email us at [ConnectedCommunitiesBC@gov.bc.ca](mailto:ConnectedCommunitiesBC@gov.bc.ca).



**Connected  
Communities**