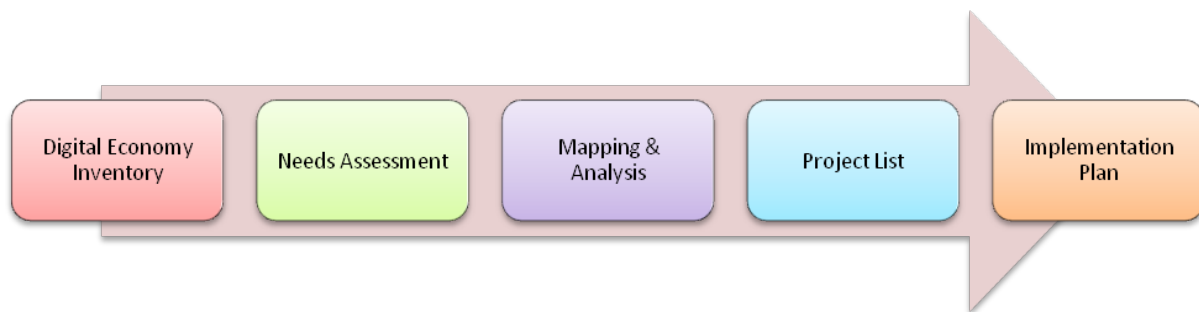# Digital Economy Plan Guide
FY2014

Digital Economy Planning (DEP) Process

The Three Rivers Regional Commission (TRRC) will conduct DEP planning activities within the 10 county TRRC region, and deliver a regional digital economy plan to the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA) towards the end of FY 2014. The TRRC intends to work with its member governments, chambers of commerce, and other interested parties to conduct a digital economy inventory, identify needs, develop a SWOC analysis, create or update digital economy resource maps, develop a preliminary list of viable digital economy projects, and outline implementation steps that can be taken to increase digital economy resources in each community.

Digital Economy Inventory → Needs Assessment → Mapping & Analysis → Project List → Implementation Plan

The TRRC has assigned the following staff to facilitate the digital economy planning activities:

Robert Hiett	**Jeannie Brantley**
Govt. Services Director	**Planning Director**
Aronda Smith	**Sam Mukoro**
Planner	**GIS Planner**

The TRRC will focus DEP planning efforts in Carroll, Coweta, Butts, Lamar, and Spalding Counties since those counties have not been recently involved with local or regional broadband planning activities. The TRRC has coordinated with the West Georgia Broadband Authority (WGBA) in Heard, Meriwether, Troup, and Upson Counties for the past two years, and the TRRC will incorporate the WGBA broadband engineering study findings into the regional plan. The Pike County Development Authority is currently in the process of soliciting bids for a single county broadband study, and the TRRC will provide an overview of those efforts in the regional digital economy plan.

Digital Economy Planning Purpose

The Georgia Technology Authority (GTA) and the TRRC are creating the DEP plan to create a framework for the region to use to help create jobs, better utilize technology resources, and expand broadband access. Some of the planning goals for the DEP process are listed below:

- To <u>improve</u> the well-being and health of residents and the viability of businesses.

- To <u>spur</u> on technology-based economic development of all kinds.

- To <u>identify and assess</u> gaps in regional broadband access and infrastructure, education, healthcare, and economic development.

- To <u>develop</u> a strategy that assesses the best way to leverage assets and resources in order to close the identified gaps.

- To <u>catalyze</u> economically competitive communities to increase competitiveness, improve service delivery, and reduce costs.

Digital Economy Stakeholders

The Three Rivers Regional Commission (TRRC) will use a combination of personal networking, press releases, online surveys, social media to inform key stakeholders about the digital economy planning process and solicit feedback. Below is a list of the engagement methods the TRRC will use to increase the awareness and stakeholder feedback about the DEP plan.

Methods of Information Awareness and Feedback

Website Press Releases	Social Media
- City and County - IDA's - Chambers	- Facebook - Linkedin
Newspaper Articles	Online Tools
- Highlight DEP Planning - Link to DEP Surveys	- Self Surveys - Official DEP Surveys - Regional Maps
Personal Interviews	Infographics
Site Visits (when feasible)	- General Technology - Industry Specific (if available)

SWOC Analysis

The TRRC will perform a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges (SWOC) analysis based on survey results, stakeholder feedback, mapping analysis, and community planning data.

S Strengths	W Weaknesses
•Region's Advantages •Digital workforce resources with experience, knowledge •Unique caracteristics •Program resources •Geographical advantage, location •Quality, reputation	•Disadvantages •Gaps in experience, knowledge, education •Gaps in funding and capital •Reliability and trust •Gaps in infrastructure •Geographical factors
O Opportunities	C Challenges
•Strategic alliances or partnerships •Education •Health Care •Business •Import / export •Innovation and technology development	•Loss of alliances and partners •Price inflation/deflation •Strong competition •Competitors' new products and innovation

Potential Project List

The TRRC will identify and list projects that would facilitate the improvement of broadband services, technology opportunities, and job training activities that would enhance the region's digital economy. The chart listed below is an example of a how a project could be identified in the plan.

PROJECT TITLE	DESCRIPTION	ESTIMATED COST	CURRENT STATUS	KEY PARTNERS	ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUIRED?	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES*
XYZ			Planning Construction Implementation	Local Government, GTA, Providers		SPLOST, Universal Service Fund, Grants, Local & Private Funds

Implementation Plan

The digital economy plan should include recommendations for moving forward that include elements of public awareness and involvement, development of public/private partnerships, technology enhancements, and any opportunities to collaborate with others for technology job training activities. Some example implementation steps are listed below.

- o Marketing campaign to discuss findings related to improving broadband planning through new initiatives
- o Roundtable meetings that foster public/private partnerships
- o A business case for new broadband providers or expanded services from current providers

Implementation plans should include short and long-term goals, task associated with the goals, measurements of success, and responsible parties.

Example:

TOPIC: Business Expansion and Retention			
	Approach: Encourage the growth of existing businesses by promoting existing broadband infrastructure.	**Timeframe**	**Responsible Party**
A.	Conduct a thorough inventory of existing broadband services	Short-term	Regional Commission
B.	Identify existing and near-future needs of current businesses and industries	Short-Range	Regional Commission, Development Authorities, Tech Colleges
C.	Coordinate with existing and/or potential providers to ensure that upcoming needs of existing industries will be met	Ongoing	Regional Commission, Development Authorities

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