

Community Focus Statement D: Attract new development to Helendale while maintaining the existing community character and rural desert lifestyle

Action Statement D.5: Coordinate with the CSD and incumbent utilities, such as Frontier, to provide higher speed internet access for Helendale residents including broadband internet (20Mbps or higher) and public hotspots.

D.5

Benchmark: Faster, reliable Internet access is available creating a community where people want to work and live.

Champion: Volunteer group or person or can be identified by the community

Estimated Cost: \$2,000–\$8,000 per outdoor hotspot, plus ongoing maintenance costs



Access to a reliable Internet connection has become not just a benefit but a necessity in modern society. Internet is essentially required for basic communication, work and education, and searching and applying for jobs. The definition of high-speed Internet as a utility was recently upheld in federal court, declaring the Internet to be as essential as electricity and gas. For those who have limited access to the Internet at home, or who need access when traveling or attending events and meetings, offering Internet access in key public locations can both increase use of those areas and provide a much-

needed resource to residents and visitors. People will often seek out places with Internet access specifically when deciding where to spend time, and that access can provide a crucial service to those who are unable to connect in any other way. Currently the local incumbent utilities do not offer adequate broadband access in Helendale.

Public Wi-Fi at community locations such as parks and other community spaces can be offered by working with the local independent service provider (ISP). A business-class router or access point (AP) may be needed, with either a location to protect the router from weather or a router that is able to withstand it. Routers can be mounted in utility sheds, in maintenance buildings, or on top of poles to ensure their safety and to ensure even Wi-Fi coverage in the area. The ISP can aid in setting up all necessary equipment and ongoing maintenance, and may be able to work out discounted pricing plans. Grants such as the EPA Cool & Connected grant can also be used to fund the installation and technical assistance in using Wi-Fi services to their full potential.

Many cities and communities now offer free public hotspot or citywide Wi-Fi. Through the Vermont Digital Economy Project and e-Vermont, free Wi-Fi zones and hotspots were implemented in 33 Vermont Towns.

Case Study: [Vermont Council on Rural Development, Planning and Implementing a Wi-Fi zone for your Town](#)

Action	Action Leader	Timeline	Resources
1. Establish community support for public Internet hotspots and create a committee.	Champion	Months 1–6	Frontier Communications local contact http://west.frontier.com/
2. Determine specific locations where hotspots are desired, such as Helendale Park.	Committee	Months 1–6	PCWorld, How to Set up Public Wi-Fi at your Business http://www.pcworld.com/article/2031443/how-to-set-up-public-wi-fi-at-your-business.html
3. Coordinate with the Helendale Community Services District.	Committee	Months 1–6	
4. Coordinate with the service provider and develop a funding plan.	Committee, Helendale Community Services District	Months 7–12	
5. Oversee ISP hotspot installation.	Helendale Community Services District	Months 13–18	TurboFuture, How to Build a Large Citywide WiFi Hotspot/Zone https://turbofuture.com/computers/How-to-Build-a-Large-Citywide-WiFi-HotspotZone
6. Establish contract for ongoing maintenance of the system.	Helendale Community Services District	Months 19–24	
7. Conduct public outreach to inform the community and visitors of the hotspot program.	Committee and Helendale Community Services District	Months 25–0	San Francisco WiFi http://sfgov.org/sfc/sanfranciscowifi Vermont Council on Rural Development http://vtrural.org/programs/digital-economy/services/wifi/toolkit