

Speeding up 5G deployment with online permitting

Case study

The City of San Jose partners with Verizon and other carriers, along with Avolve Software, to accelerate 5G deployment and help close the digital gap for residents.



Challenge

In San Jose, the capital of Silicon Valley, an estimated 95,000 residents are without high-speed internet access at home.¹ In an effort to close this digital divide, the city launched the Digital Inclusion Fund in February 2019—the largest of its kind in the nation.

Over the next 10 years, the fund will help provide 50,000 households with universal connectivity and device access. In addition, San Jose has entered into agreements with Verizon, AT&T and Mobilitie (on behalf of Sprint) to expand 5G technology within the city through the accelerated deployment of 4,000 4G and 5G small-cell units across the city.²

Yet, in many municipalities, including San Jose, rolling out the infrastructure necessary for 5G entails a lengthy and complex permitting process. Paper-based permit systems often rely on the specialized training and knowledge of a number of individuals. Plus, the potential for errors and gaps in documentation and a less robust process of checks and balances in paper-based systems can put community assets at risk.



Solution

To help San Jose transition to digital and expand connectivity, the city implemented several permitting performance improvements, which included working with Avolve Software to implement a Verizon-sponsored online permitting solution.

The solution provides a convenient online self-serve portal to apply for permits, submit plans and review, collaborate on and manage approved or as-built plans. The city can review and approve sites electronically—expediting deployment of fiber and small cells. So far, San Jose has permitted over 943 sites and expects about 3,000 more to be developed over the next several years.³



Results

San Jose was able to streamline and automate the entire permitting process, significantly cutting back time to obtain permits, accelerating small cell deployments and ultimately expanding connectivity to residents.

As a result, the city of San Jose:

- Reduced the average permitting cycle time from 49 to 18 days.
- Decreased the average time spent per examiner from 23 to 3 days
- Increased the number of permits processed from 200/year to over 1,800+/year



1 San Jose Digital Inclusion Fund. <https://www.sjdigitalinclusion.org/>

2 Elizabeth Mendez, "San Jose mayor leads municipal opposition of FCC mandate," *San Jose Spotlight*, February 12, 2020. <https://sanjosespotlight.com/san-jose-mayor-leads-municipal-opposition-of-fcc-mandate/>

3 Tiffany Camhi, "5G is Officially in San Francisco and San Jose. But Who Really Has Access?," *KQED*, December 15, 2019. <https://www.kqed.org/news/11791335/5g-is-officially-in-san-francisco-and-san-jose-but-who-really-has-access>