IPv4 NLRI with IPv6 Next Hop Use Cases
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Abstract

   As Enterprises and Service Providers upgrade their brown field or
   green field MPLS/SR core to an IPv6 transport such as MPLS LDPv6, SR-
   MPLSv6 or SRv6, Multiprotocol BGP (MP-BGP)now plays an important role
   in the transition of the core from IPv4 to IPv6 being able to
   continue to support legacy IPv4, VPN-IPv4, and Multicast VPN IPv4
   customers.

   Multiprotocol BGP (MP-BGP) specifies that the set of usable next-hop
   address families is determined by the Address Family Identifier (AFI)
   and the Subsequent Address Family Identifier (SAFI). Historically
   the AFI/SAFI definitions for the IPv4 address family only have
   provisions for advertising a Next Hop address that belongs to the
   IPv4 protocol when advertising IPv4 or VPN-IPv4 Network Layer
   Reachability Information (NLRI). [RFC5549] specifies the extensions
   necessary to allow advertising IPv4 NLRI or VPN-IPv4 NLRI with a Next
   Hop address that belongs to the IPv6 protocol. This comprises an
   extension of the AFI/SAFI definitions to allow the address of the
   Next Hop for IPv4 NLRI or VPN-IPv4 NLRI to also belong to the IPv6
   Protocol. [RFC5549] defines the encoding of the Next Hop to
   determine which of the protocols the address actually belongs to, and
   a new BGP Capability allowing MP-BGP Peers to dynamically discover
   whether they can exchange IPv4 NLRI and VPN-IPv4 NLRI with an IPv6
   Next Hop.

   With this new MP-BGP capability exchange allows the BGP peering
   session to act as a pure transport to allow the session to carry
   Address Family Identifier (AFI) and the Subsequent Address Family
   Identifier (SAFI) for both IPv4 and IPv6.

   This document describes the critical use case and OPEX savings of
   being able to leverage the MP-BGP capability exchange usage as a pure
   transport allowing both IPv4 and IPv6 to be carried over the same BGP
   TCP session. By doing so, allows for the elimination of Dual
   Stacking on the PE-CE connections making the peering IPv6-ONLY to now
   carry both IPv4 and IPv6 Network Layer Reachability Information
   (NLRI). This document also provides a possible solution for IXPs

(Internet Exchange points) that are facing IPv4 address depletion at
these peering points to use BGP-MP capability exchange defined in
[RFC5549] to carry IPv4 (Network Layer Reachability Information) NLRI
in an IPv6 next hop using the [RFC5565] softwire mesh framework.

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1. Introduction

As Enterprises and Service Providers upgrade their brown field or
green field MPLS/SR core to an IPv6 transport such as MPLS LDPv6, SR-
MPLSv6 or SRv6, Multiprotocol BGP (MP-BGP)now plays an important role
in the transition of the core from IPv4 to IPv6, and being able to
continue to support legacy IPv4, VPN-IPv4, and Multicast VPN IPv4
customers.

IXPs (Internet Exchange points) are also facing IPv4 address
depletion at their peering points, which are large Layer 2 transit
backbones that service providers peer and exchange IPv4 and IPv6
(Network Layer Reachability Information) NLRI. Today these transit
exchange points are dual stacked. One proposal to solve this issue
is to use [RFC5549] to carry IPv4 (Network Layer Reachability
Information) NLRI in an IPv6 next hop and eliminate the IPv4 peering
completely using the concept of [RFC5565] softwire mesh framework.
So now with the MP-BGP reach capability exchanged over IPv4 AFI over
IPv6 next hop peer we can now advertise IPv4(Network Layer
Reachability Information) NLRI over IPv6 peering using the [RFC5565]
softwire mesh framework.

Multiprotocol BGP (MP-BGP) [RFC4760] specifies that the set of
network-layer protocols to which the address carried in the Next Hop
field may belong is determined by the Address Family Identifier (AFI)
and the Subsequent Address Family Identifier (SAFI). A number of
existing AFI/SAFIs allow the Next Hop address to belong to a
different address family than the Network Layer Reachability
Information (NLRI).

For example, the AFI/SAFI <25/65> used (as per [RFC6074]) to perform
L2VPN auto-discovery, allows advertising NLRI that contains the
identifier of a Virtual Private LAN Service (VPLS) instance or that
identifies a particular pool of attachment circuits at a given
Provider Edge (PE), while the Next Hop field contains the loopback
address of a PE. Similarly, the AFI/SAFI <1/132> (defined in
[RFC4684]) to advertise Route Target (RT) membership information,
allows advertising NLRI that contains such RT membership information,
while the Next Hop field contains the address of the advertising
router.

Furthermore, a number of these existing AFI/SAFIs allow the Next Hop
to belong to either the IPv4 Network Layer Protocol or the IPv6
Network Layer Protocol, and specify the encoding of the Next Hop
information to determine which of the protocols the address actually
belongs to. For example, [RFC4684] allows the Next Hop address to be
either IPv4 or IPv6 and states that the Next Hop field address shall
be interpreted as an IPv4 address whenever the length of Next Hop
address is 4 octets, and as an IPv6 address whenever the length of
the Next Hop address is 16 octets.

There are situations such as those described in [RFC4925] and in
[RFC5565] where carriers (or large enterprise networks acting as
carrier for their internal resources) may be required to establish
connectivity between 'islands' of networks of one address family type
across a transit core of a differing address family type. This
includes both the case of IPv6 islands across an IPv4 core and the
case of IPv4 islands across an IPv6 core. Where Multiprotocol BGP
(MP-BGP) is used to advertise the corresponding reachability
information, this translates into the requirement for a BGP speaker
to advertise Network Layer Reachability Information (NLRI) of a given
address family via a Next Hop of a different address family (i.e.,
IPv6 NLRI with IPv4 Next Hop and IPv4 NLRI with IPv6 Next Hop).

The current AFI/SAFI definitions for the IPv6 address family assume
that the Next Hop address belongs to the IPv6 address family type.
Specifically, as per [RFC2545] and [RFC8277], when the <AFI/SAFI> is
<2/1>, <2/2>, or <2/4>, the Next Hop address is assumed to be of IPv6
type. As per [RFC4659], when the <AFI/SAFI> is <2/128>, the Next Hop
address is assumed to be of IPv6-VPN type.

However, [RFC4798] and [RFC4659] specify how an IPv4 address can be
encoded inside the Next Hop IPv6 address field when IPv6 NLRI needs
to be advertised with an IPv4 Next Hop. [RFC4798] defines how the
IPv4-mapped IPv6 address format specified in the IPv6 addressing
architecture ([RFC4291]) can be used for that purpose when the <AFI/
SAFI> is <2/1>, <2/2>, or <2/4>. [RFC4659] defines how the IPv4-
mapped IPv6 address format as well as a null Route Distinguisher can
be used for that purpose when the <AFI/SAFI> is <2/128>. Thus, there
are existing solutions for the advertisement of IPv6 NLRI with an
IPv4 Next Hop.

Similarly, the current AFI/SAFI definitions for advertisement of IPv4
NLRI or VPN-IPv4 NLRI assume that the Next Hop address belongs to the
IPv4 address family type. Specifically, as per [RFC4760] and
[RFC8277], when the <AFI/SAFI> is <1/1>, <1/2>, or <1/4>, the Next
Hop address is assumed to be of IPv4 type. As per [RFC4364], when
the <AFI/SAFI> is <1/128>, the Next Hop address is assumed to be of
VPN-IPv4 type. As per [RFC6513] and [RFC6514], when the <AFI/SAFI>

   is <1/129>, the Next Hop address is assumed to be of VPN-IPv4 type.
   There is clearly no generally applicable method for encoding an IPv6
   address inside the IPv4 address field of the Next Hop. Hence, there
   is currently no specified solution for advertising IPv4 or VPN-IPv4
   NLRI with an IPv6 Next Hop.

   A new specification for carrying IPv4 Network Layer Reachability
   Information (NLRI) of a given address family via a Next Hop of a
   different address family is now defined in [RFC5549], and specifies
   the extensions necessary to do so. This comprises an extension of
   the AFI/SAFI definitions to allow the address of the Next Hop for
   IPv4 NLRI or VPN-IPv4 NLRI to belong to either the IPv4 or the IPv6
   protocol, the encoding of the Next Hop information to determine which
   of the protocols the address actually belongs to, and a new BGP
   Capability allowing MP-BGP peers to dynamically discover whether they
   can exchange IPv4 NLRI and VPN- IPv4 NLRI with an IPv6 Next Hop.

   With the new extensions defined in [RFC5549] supporting Network Layer
   Reachability Information (NLRI) and next hop address family mismatch,
   the BGP peer session can now be treated as a pure transport and carry
   both IPv4 and IPv6 NLRI at the PE-CE edge over a single IPv6 TCP
   session. This allows for the elimination of dual stack from the PE-
   CE peering point, and now allow the peering to be IPv6-ONLY. The
   elimination of IPv4 on the PE-CE peering points translates into OPEX
   expenditure savings of point-to-point infrastructure links as well as
   /31 address space savings and administration and network management
   of both IPv4 and IPv6 BGP peers. This reduction decreases the number
   of PE-CE BGP peers by fifty percent, which is a tremendous cost
   savings for all Enterprises and Service Providers.

   While the savings exists at the PE-CE edge, on the core side PE to
   Route Reflector peering carrying <AFI/SAFI> IPv4 <1/1>, VPN-IPV4
   <1/128>, and Multicasat VPN <1/129>, the cost savings nets to a break
   even to be the same as with an IPV4 Core carrying IPv6 NLRI IPV6
   <2/1>, VPN-IPV6 <2/128>, and Multicasat VPN <2/129>. This document
   also provides a possible solution for IXPs (Internet Exchange points)
   that are facing IPv4 address depletion at these peering points to use
   BGP-MP capability exchange defined in [RFC5549] to carry IPv4
   (Network Layer Reachability Information) NLRI in an IPv6 next hop
   using the [RFC5565] softwire mesh framework.

2. Requirements Language

   The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT",
   "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "NOT RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and
   "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in BCP
   14 [RFC2119] [RFC8174] when, and only when, they appear in all
   capitals, as shown here.

3. Extension of AFI/SAFI Definitions for the IPv4 Address Family

   As mentioned earlier, MP-BGP specifies that the set of usable next-
   hop address families is determined by the Address Family Identifier
   (AFI) and the Subsequent Address Family Identifier (SAFI). The
   following current AFI/SAFI definitions for the IPv4 NLRI or VPN-IPv4
   NLRI (<1/1>, <1/2>, <1/4>, <1/128> and <1/129>) only have provisions
   for advertising a Next Hop address that belongs to the IPv4 protocol.
   This document extends the definition of the AFI/SAFI for
   advertisement of IPv4 NLRI and VPN-IPv4 NLRI to extend the set of
   usable next-hop address families to include IPv6 in addition to IPv4.

   Specifically, this document allows advertising with [RFC4760] of an
   MP_REACH_NLRI with:

   o AFI = 1

   o SAFI = 1, 2, or 4

   o Length of Next Hop Address = 16 or 32

   o Next Hop Address = IPv6 address of next hop (potentially followed
      by the link-local IPv6 address of the next hop). This field is to
      be constructed as per Section 3 of [RFC2545].

   o NLRI= NLRI as per current AFI/SAFI definition

   It also allows advertising with [RFC4760] of an MP_REACH_NLRI with:

   o AFI = 1

   o SAFI = 128 or 129

   o Length of Next Hop Address = 24 or 48

   o Next Hop Address = VPN-IPv6 address of next hop with an 8-octet RD
      set to zero (potentially followed by the link-local VPN-IPv6
      address of the next hop with an 8-octet RD is set to zero).

   o NLRI= NLRI as per current AFI/SAFI definition

   This is in addition to the current mode of operation allowing
   advertisement of NLRI for <AFI/SAFI> of <1/1>, <1/2> and <1/4> with a
   next hop address of IPv4 type and advertisement of NLRI for <AFI/
   SAFI> of <1/128> and <1/129> with a next hop address of VPN-IPv4
   type.

The BGP speaker receiving the advertisement MUST use the Length of
Next Hop Address field to determine which network-layer protocol the
next hop address belongs to.

o When the AFI/SAFI is <1/1>, <1/2> or <1/4> and when the Length of
   Next Hop Address field is equal to 16 or 32, the next hop address
   is of type IPv6.

o When the AFI/SAFI is <1/128>, or <1/129> and when the Length of
   Next Hop Address field is equal to 24 or 48, the next hop address
   is of type VPN-IPv6.

Note that this method of using the Length of the Next Hop Address
field to determine which network-layer protocol the next hop address
belongs to (out of the set of protocols allowed by the AFI/SAFI
definition) is the same as used in [RFC4684] and [RFC6074].

4. **Use of BGP Capability Advertisement**

[RFC5492] defines a mechanism to allow two BGP speakers to discover
if a particular capability is supported by their BGP peer and thus
whether it can be used with that peer. This document defines a new
capability that can be advertised using [RFC5492] and that is
referred to as the Extended Next Hop Encoding capability. This
capability allows BGP speakers to discover whether, for a given NLRI
<AFI/SAFI>, a peer supports advertisement with a next hop whose
network protocol is determined by the value of the Length of Next Hop
Address field, as specified in Section 3.

A BGP speaker that wishes to advertise to a BGP peer an IPv6 Next Hop
for IPv4 NLRI or for VPN-IPv4 NLRI as per this specification MUST use
the Capability Advertisement procedures defined in [RFC5492] with the
Extended Next Hop Encoding Capability to determine whether its peer
supports this for the NLRI AFI/SAFI pair(s) of interest. The fields
in the Capabilities Optional Parameter MUST be set as follows:

o The Capability Code field MUST be set to 5 (which indicates the
   Extended Next Hop Encoding capability).

o The Capability Length field is set to a variable value that is the
   length of the Capability Value field (which follows).

o The Capability Value field has the following format:

```
        +-------------------------------------------------------+
        | NLRI AFI - 1 (2 octets)                               |
        +-------------------------------------------------------+
        | NLRI SAFI - 1 (2 octets)                              |
        +-------------------------------------------------------+
        | Nexthop AFI - 1 (2 octets)                            |
        +-------------------------------------------------------+
        | .....                                                 |
        +-------------------------------------------------------+
        | NLRI AFI - N (2 octets)                               |
        +-------------------------------------------------------+
        | NLRI SAFI - N (2 octets)                              |
        +-------------------------------------------------------+
        | Nexthop AFI - N (2 octets)                            |
        +-------------------------------------------------------+
```

   where:

   * each triple <NLRI AFI, NLRI SAFI, Nexthop AFI> indicates that
      NLRI of <NLRI AFI / NLRI SAFI> may be advertised with a Next
      Hop address belonging to the network-layer protocol of Nexthop
      AFI.

   * the AFI and SAFI values are defined in the Address Family
      Identifier and Subsequent Address Family Identifier registries
      maintained by IANA.

   Since this document only concerns itself with the advertisement of
   IPv4 NLRI and VPN-IPv4 NLRI with an IPv6 Next Hop, this specification
   only allows the following values in the Capability Value field of the
   Extended Next Hop Encoding capability:

   o NLRI AFI = 1 (IPv4)

   o NLRI SAFI = 1, 2, 4, 128 or 129

   o Nexthop AFI = 2 (IPv6)

   This document does not specify the use of the Extended Next Hop
   Encoding capability with any other combinations of <NLRI AFI, NLRI
   SAFI, Nexthop AFI>. For example, the Next Hop Encoding capability
   specified in this document is not intended to be used for NLRI AFI/
   SAFIs whose definition already allows use of both IPv4 and IPv6 next
   hops (e.g., AFI/SAFI = <1/132> as defined in [RFC4684]). Similarly,
   it is not intended that the Extended Next Hop Encoding capability be
   used for NLRI AFI/SAFIs for which there is already solution for
   advertising a next hop of a different address family (e.g., AFI/SAFI

= <2/1>, <2/2>, or <2/4> with IPv4 Next Hop as per [RFC4798] and AFI/
SAFI = <2/128> with IPv4 Next Hop as per [RFC4659]).

It is expected that if new AFI/SAFIs are defined in the future, their
definition will have provisions (where appropriate) for both IPv4 and
IPv6 Next Hops from the onset, with determination based on Length of
Next Hop Address field. Thus, new AFI/SAFIs are not expected to make
use of the Extended Next Hop Encoding capability.

A BGP speaker MUST only advertise to a BGP peer the IPv4 or VPN-IPv4
NLRI with an IPv6 Next Hop if the BGP speaker has first ascertained
via BGP Capability Advertisement that the BGP peer supports the
Extended Next Hop Encoding capability for the relevant AFI/SAFI pair.

The Extended Next Hop Encoding capability provides information about
next hop encoding for a given AFI/SAFI, assuming that AFI/SAFI is
allowed. It does not influence whether that AFI/SAFI is indeed
allowed. Whether a AFI/SAFI can be used between the BGP peers is
purely determined through the Multiprotocol Extensions capability
defined in [RFC4760].

The Extended Next Hop Encoding capability MAY be dynamically updated
through the use of the Dynamic Capability capability and associated
mechanisms defined in [I-D.ietf-idr-dynamic-cap].

5. Operations

As Enterprises and Service Providers migrate their IPv4 core to an
MPLS LDPv6 or SRv6 transport, they must continue to be able to
support legacy IPv4 customers. With the new extensions defined in
[RFC4760], supporting Network Layer Reachability Information (NLRI)
and next hop address family mismatch, the BGP peer session can now be
treated as a pure transport and carry both IPv4 and IPv6 NLRI at the
PE-CE edge. This paves the way to now eliminate dual stacking on all
PE-CE peering points to customers making the peering IPv6 only. With
this change all IPv4 and IPv6 Network Layer Reachability Information
(NLRI) will now be carried over a single BGP session. This also
solves the dual stack issue with IXP (Internet Exchange Points)
having to maintain separate peering for both IPv4 and IPv6. From an
operations perspective the PE-CE edge peering will be drastically
simplified with the elimination of IPv4 peers yielding a reduction of
peers by 50 percent. From an operations perspective prior to
elimination of IPv4 peers an audit is recommended to identify and
IPv4 and IPv6 peering incongruencies that may exist and to rectify
prior to elimination of the IPv4 peers. No operational impacts or
issues are expected with this change.

When a next hop address needs to be passed along unchanged (e.g., as
a Route Reflector (RR) would do), its encoding MUST NOT be changed.
If a particular RR client cannot handle that encoding (as determined
by the BGP Capability Advertisement), then the NLRI in question
cannot be distributed to that client. For sound routing in certain
scenarios, this will require that all the RR clients be able to
handle whatever encodings any of them may generate.

6. Softwire Framework Use Cases of IPv4 NLRI with IPv6 Next Hop

6.1. VPN-IPv4 over MPLS LDPv6 or SRv6 Core

The new MP-BGP extensions defined in [RFC5549] is used to support
IPV4 VPNs over an IPv6 MPLS LDPv6 or SRv6 backbone. In this scenario
the PE routers would advertise and receive VPN-IPv4 NLRI in the
MP_REACH_NLRI along with an IPv6 Next Hop from the Route Reflector
(RR).

MP-BGP Reach Pseudo code:

If ((Update AFI == VPN-IPv4)

and (Length of next hop == 24 Bytes || 48 Bytes))

{

This is an VPN-IPv4 route, but

with an IPv6 next hop;

}

The MP_REACH_NLRI is encoded with:

o AFI = 1

o SAFI = 128

o Length of Next Hop Network Address = 24 (or 48)

o Network Address of Next Hop = VPN-IPv6 address of Next Hop whose
   RD is set to zero

o NLRI = IPv4-VPN routes

During BGP Capability Advertisement, the PE routers would include the
following fields in the Capabilities Optional Parameter:

o Capability Code set to "Extended Next Hop Encoding"

o Capability Value containing <NLRI AFI=1, NLRI SAFI=128, Nexthop
   AFI=2>

6.2. IPv4 VPN multicast over MPLS LDPv6 or SRv6 Core

The new MP-BGP extensions defined in [RFC8126] is used to support
IPV4 Multicast VPNs over an MPLS LDPv6 or SRv6 backbone. In this
scenario, the PE routers would advertise and receive VPN-IPv4 NLRI in
the MP_REACH_NLRI along with an IPv6 Next Hop from the Route
Reflector (RR).

MP-BGP Reach Pseudo code:

If ((Update AFI == MVPN-IPv4)

and (Length of next hop == 24 Bytes || 48 Bytes))

{

This is an MVPN-IPv4 route, but

with an IPv6 next hop;

}

The MP_REACH_NLRI is encoded with:

o AFI = 1

o SAFI = 129

o Length of Next Hop Network Address = 24 (or 48)

o Network Address of Next Hop = VPN-IPv6 address of Next Hop whose
   RD is set to zero

o NLRI = IPv4-VPN routes

During BGP Capability Advertisement, the PE routers would include the
following fields in the Capabilities Optional Parameter:

o Capability Code set to "Extended Next Hop Encoding"

o Capability Value containing <NLRI AFI=1, NLRI SAFI=129, Nexthop
   AFI=2>

6.3. IPv4 Islands over MPLS LDPv6 or SRv6 Core

The new MP-BGP extensions defined in [RFC5549] is used to support
IPV4 islands over an IPv6 MPLS LDPv6 or SRv6 backbone. In this
scenario the PE routers would use BGP labeled unicast address family
(BGP-LU) to advertise BGP with label binding and receive labeled IPv4
NLRI in the MP_REACH_NLRI along with an IPv6 Next Hop from the Route
Reflector (RR).

MP-BGP Reach Pseudo code:

If ((Update AFI == IPv4)

and (Length of next hop == 16 Bytes || 32 Bytes))

{

This is an IPv4 route, but

with an IPv6 next hop;

}

The MP_REACH_NLRI is encoded with:

o AFI = 1

o SAFI = 1

o Length of Next Hop Network Address = 16 (or 32)

o Network Address of Next Hop = IPv6 address of Next Hop whose RD is
   set to zero

o NLRI = IPv4-VPN routes

During BGP Capability Advertisement, the PE routers would include the
following fields in the Capabilities Optional Parameter:

o Capability Code set to "Extended Next Hop Encoding"

o Capability Value containing <NLRI AFI=1, NLRI SAFI=1, Nexthop
   AFI=2>

7. IANA Considerations

   There are not any IANA considerations.

8. Security Considerations

   The extensions defined in this document allow BGP to propagate
   reachability information about IPv6 routes over an MPLS IPv4 core
   network. As such, no new security issues are raised beyond those
   that already exist in BGP-4 and use of MP-BGP for IPv6. The security
   features of BGP and corresponding security policy defined in the ISP
   domain are applicable. For the inter-AS distribution of IPv6 routes
   according to case (a) of Section 4 of this document, no new security
   issues are raised beyond those that already exist in the use of eBGP
   for IPv6 [RFC2545].

9. Acknowledgments

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