

APPROVED

A regular meeting of the Albemarle County Broadband Authority was held on January 25, 2023. The meeting was held in room 241 of the Albemarle County Office Building located at 401 McIntire Road.

PRESENT: Mr. Bucky Walsh, Mr. Waldo Jaquith, Ms. Donna Price, Mr. Jim Andrews, Mr. Trevor Henry, Mr. Bill Fritz

ABSENT: None

Also Present: Mr. Richard DeLoria (Senior Assistant County Attorney), Mike Culp (Director of Broadband Accessibility and Affordability Office) and Jason Inofuentes (Program Manager, Broadband Accessibility and Affordability Office)

Agenda Item No. 1. Establish Quorum and Call to Order.

Mr. Walsh established a quorum and called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Agenda Item No. 2 Approval of Agenda

Mr. Walsh **moved** to approve the agenda.

Mr. Andrews **seconded** the motion.

The motion was **approved** unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 3 Brief Announcements from the Board

Mr. Henry requested that ABBA keep track of how many comments are made by the public in person or virtually.

Agenda Item No. 4 Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

There was one member of the public present for the meeting.

There were four virtual attendees.

Agenda Item No. 5 Approval of September 28, 2022, October 26, 2022, and December 6, 2022, Meeting Minutes

Mr. Walsh **moved** to approve the minutes.

Mr. Henry **seconded** the motion.

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The motion was **approved** unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 6 Old Business

Agenda Item No. 6a VATI 2021 Update Corrective Action Plan and Letter of Findings Response

Mr. Culp introduced Mr. Richard Schollmann from Brightspeed.

Mr. Culp shared a PowerPoint presentation. (Attached to these minutes)

Mr. Inofuentes stated that temporary drops are being used instead of permanent installations. This has improved connection rates and reduced missed installation dates. Mr. Inofuentes noted that permanent installations will be done later.

Mr. Henry stated that there is no way to tell from the report what is temporary and what is permanent. Mr. Henry noted that the number of passings have not increased.

Mr. Culp stated that work is ongoing and the report next month will likely show new passings.

Mr. Henry asked if people are still signing up so that the take rate will improve.

Mr. Schollmann stated that was correct. Mr. Schollmann stated that they are having problems getting crews to bury the drops and make the connections permanent. All crews in Virginia are working and additional crews have been brought in from Alabama.

Mr. Henry asked if the temporary drops are in place for 60 days.

Mr. Schollmann stated that the homeowner has the choice of getting a temporary or permanent drop. If a permanent drop is requested the installation is typically delayed about 60 days.

Mr. Henry asked if there is a contractual agreement that the permanent installation be completed within 60 days.

Mr. Jaquith asked Mr. Schollmann if he felt that the work will be done by March 31st.

Mr. Schollmann stated that he felt the work would be completed by March 31st.

Ms. Price stated that she had been contacted by DSL users who stated that their service remains slow.

Mr. Schollman stated that they have a program looking at the copper lines. Mr. Schollman requested that any problems with DSL service be forwarded to him.

Ms. Price noted that the problem is improving but has not been solved.

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Mr. Schollmann noted that they realize they have a problem and have to answer to the SCC. They cannot identify a problem remotely so they need people to tell them where there is a problem.

Ms. Price noted that calling takes a long time to get through and the customer service received when they do make contact is not the best.

Mr. Culp stated that the Department of Housing and Community development has asked for ABBA to approve payment requests.

Mr. DeLoria stated that this should be reviewed and would be appropriate for discussion in closed session.

Agenda Item No. 6b VATI 2022 Update

Mr. Culp introduced Ms. Lori Allshouse who is working for the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission and is leading VATI 2022 project. Mr. Culp shared a PowerPoint presentation. (Attached to these minutes)

Mr. Culp stated that the Broadband Authority put in an incentive agreement for CVEC members.

Mr. Gary Wood from CVEC/Firefly provided a copy of a letter sent to Mr. Culp. (Attached to these minutes)

Mr. Wood noted that the White Hall project is expected to be completed about a year earlier than planned.

Mr. Walsh stated that Dominion isn't moving as fast as ABBA would like and asked if there was anything that could be done.

Mr. Wood stated that they are trying to move fast. Mr. Wood noted that engineering and field work have almost been completed in Albemarle. Mr. Wood stated that Dominion still needs to file to get their rates adjusted to account for the work and that Dominion has started the work even before they have approval to adjust rates.

Agenda Item No. 6c VATI 2023 Planning

Mr. Culp shared a PowerPoint presentation. (Attached to these minutes)

Mr. Culp stated that he is expecting a possible announcement in February.

Mr. Walsh asked when does the federal money hit the state?

Mr. Culp stated that the money is expected in June.

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Mr. Culp noted that there is \$49 million in state funding and \$300 million in project requests.

Agenda Item No. 6d ABBA Financial Report (Appendix A)

Mr. Henry stated there was no change from last month.

Agenda Item No. 6e(i) Broadband Accessibility and Affordability Report

Mr. Inofuentes shared a PowerPoint presentation. (Attached to these minutes)

Agenda Item No. 6e(ii) Regional Digital Equity Plan (RDEP) and Grant Application

Mr. Inofuentes shared a PowerPoint presentation. (Attached to these minutes)

Agenda Item No. 6e(iii) Broadband Advisory Council Meeting Update

Mr. Culp shared a PowerPoint presentation. (Attached to these minutes)

Mr. Culp stated that there is a potential budget amendment at the state level for connectivity payments.

Mr. Inofuentes provided an overview of BAAO strategic priorities for year 2.

Agenda Item No. 7 New Business

Agenda Item No. 7a Strategy to Create Two Consent Items (Monthly Financial Report; BAAO Quarterly Report to Board of Supervisors)

Mr. Culp stated that there would be two items for a consent agenda, the monthly financial report and the BAAO quarterly report.

Mr. Jaquith noted that ABBA is tasked with providing reports to the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors would need to change their requirements for who submits the reports.

Mr. Walsh stated that we need a clear way of adding things to the consent agenda and a procedure on how to pull items.

Mr. DeLoria stated that the bylaws change has been prepared for consideration at the next meeting.

Mr. Jaquith stated that the role of BAAO has evolved and this is good and healthy. Having the quarterly reports come from BAAO is appropriate and represents the professionalization of the work.

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Agenda Item No. 11 Adjourn

Mr. Walsh **moved** to adjourn.

Mr. Jaquith **seconded** the motion.

The motion was **approved** unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

				Update: 01/18/2023
4-4300-91097-491097-950030-9999 (EXPENSE CODE) + ARPA 5301 Fund				
BROADBAND INCENTIVES>ALBEMARLE BROADBAND AUTHORITY + ARPA Funding				
	Fund Balance	Commitment/ Projected Expenses	Paid Expenses	Remaining Project Funds
Current FY23 Balance (includes \$4.5mil in ARPA Appropriation, \$4.37mil of that for VATI 2022)	\$5,099,325.90			
VATI 2021 Project Commitment Brightspeed: Payment on Hold		\$640,000.00	\$0.00	
VATI 2022 Project Commitment TJPDC/Firefly: First payment for \$121,863.50 is in process		\$4,368,000.00	\$0.00	
	\$91,325.90	\$5,008,000.00	\$0.00	\$91,325.90
Note: Remaining Project Funds unless noted otherwise are subject to ARPA Guidelines and Rules.				



Albemarle Broadband Authority

January 25, 2023



Agenda

- 1. Establish Quorum and Call to Order**
- 2. Approval of Agenda**
- 3. Brief Announcements by Authority Members**
- 4. Public Comment**
- 5. Approval of September 28, 2022, October 26, 2022, and December 6, 2022 Meeting Minutes**
- 6. Old Business**

- a) VATI 2021 Update and Brightspeed Discussion
- b) VATI 2022 Update
- c) VATI 2023 Planning
- d) ABBA Financial Report (Appendix A)
- e) Broadband Accessibility and Affordability (BAAO) Report

- i. Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) Bridge
- ii. Regional Digital Equity Plan (RDEP) and Grant Application
- iii. Jan. 20, 2023 Broadband Advisory Council Meeting Update

7. New Business

- a) Strategy to Create Two Consent Items (Monthly Financial Report; BAAO Quarterly Report to Board of Supervisors)

8. Adjourn



VATI 2021 Update

- Construction continues in all remaining project areas
- Brightspeed efforts are focused on completing all construction activities by March 31st
- Site visit demonstrated progress along Foster's Branch
- Nearing completion at Murray Ln



VATI 2021 Update

- Corrective Action Plan progress assessed and discussions made clear the circumstances have improved
- Tracking document has demonstrated decrease in missed installations, increased communications around issues
- Remaining issues are addressable with time



VATI 2021 Update

Last updated: January 24, 2023

Project Area	Ordered Service	Pending	Active	Passings	Estd. Take Rate
Jones Mill	30	3	27	57	53%
Old Garth	5	1	4	6	83%
Tilman/ Meriweather	31	3	28	48	65%
Snow Hill Ln	18	1	17	71	25%
Gilbert Station	25	1	24	46	54%
Advance Mills	42	0	42	122	34%
Milton Hills	48	11	37	172	28%
Taylor's Gap	112	34	78	233	48%
Total	311	54	257	755	41%



VATI 2021 Update



VATI 2022 Update

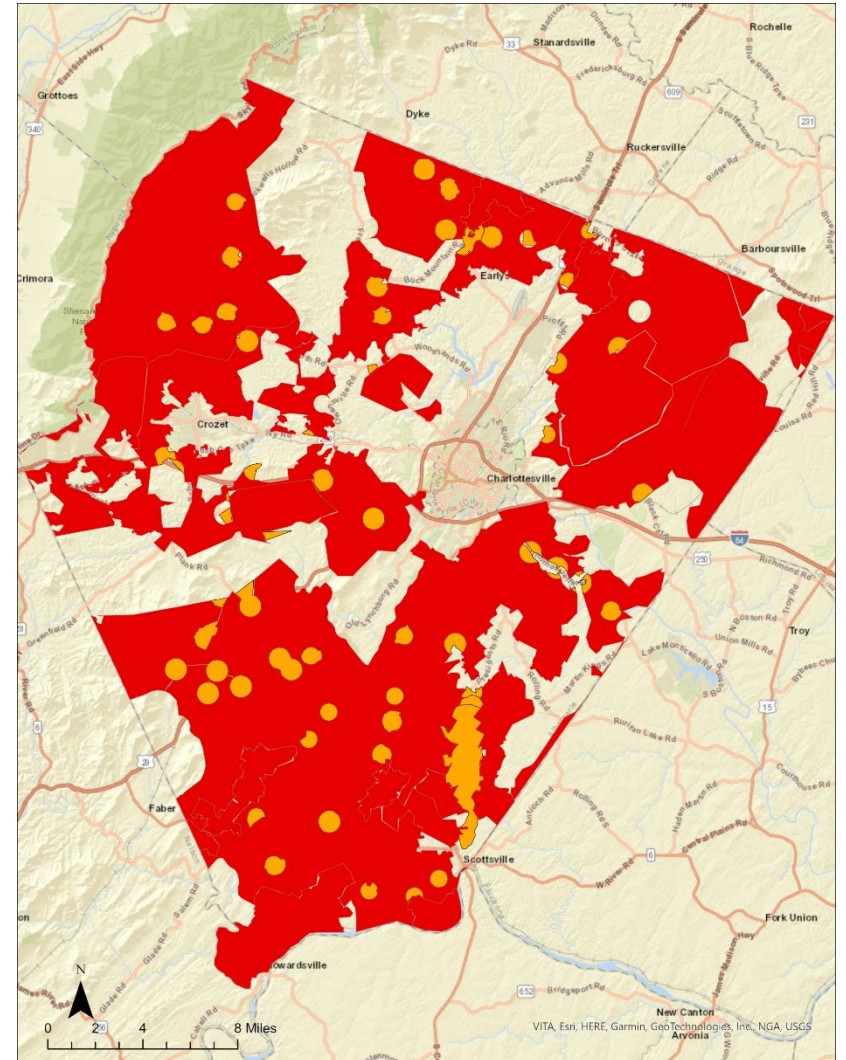


- Dominion is currently expanding its middle mile infrastructure in Albemarle County
- Make-ready work continues in the AEP and REC areas
- Firefly expects to make connections in the AEP and REC areas in Spring 2023
- Firefly project tracking page for Albemarle: [Partners-Albemarle - Firefly Fiber Broadband \(fireflyva.com\)](https://fireflyva.com/partners-albemarle)



VATI 2023 Application

- 1,575 Passings
- Projected total budget of \$8.8M
- VATI Request: \$3.6M
- BAAO Match: $\leq$ \$440,000
- Awaiting Award Decision



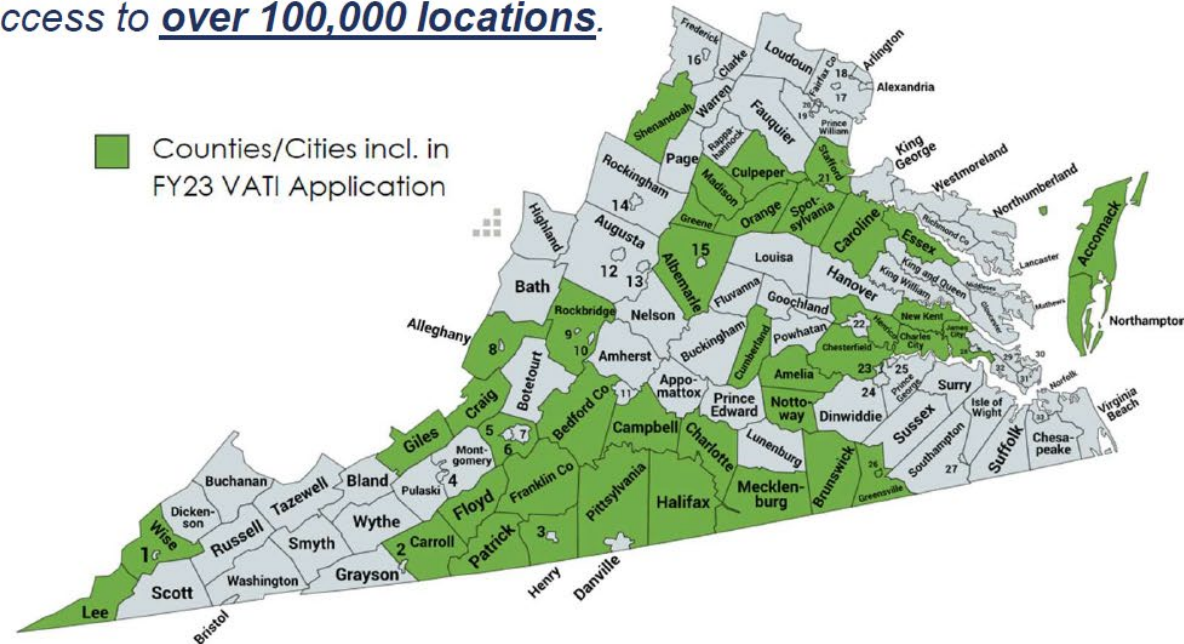


VATI 2023 Application

FY2023 Virginia Telecommunication Initiative Applications



FY2023 VATI Applications totaled over \$300 million in funds requested and propose to provide broadband access to over 100,000 locations.





ABBA Financial Report

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BAAO Report

- Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) Bridge
- Regional Digital Equity Plan (RDEP) and Grant Application
- January 20, 2023 Broadband Advisory Council Meeting Update



ACP Bridge

- \$20 per month supplement to the FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program
- Has launched with our first provider partner: Comcast
- Launch event planned for this winter
- BAAO continues to seek additional partners
 - Major barrier are transitions in billing software



RDEP and Grant Application

Qualitative Methods Cohort

- Organizing and preparing questions for focus groups
- Executing on several focus groups with ~3 cohorts
- Analyzing and reporting out on focus group results

May delivery of report

Quantitative Methods Cohort

- Organizing and preparing questions for possible surveys
- Doing demographic analysis and needs assessment based on speed test/sentiment survey data
- Reporting out on analysis

May delivery of report



RDEP and Grant Application

ACP
Navigator
Pilot

Provides access to the National Verifier, improving effectiveness of outreach and in-person enrollment assistance

ACP Outreach Grants

Proposes the hiring of 2-3 digital navigators to do in-person outreach and enrollment assistance, along with a large marketing effort to include:

- Direct Mail
- Digital Display Ads
- Text Messages
- In-person canvassing
- An ACP Landing Page
- Engagement with community partners



RDEP and Grant Application

ACP Outreach Grants

Total funding request: \$730,847.91

Application review involves three phases:

- Administrative review
Ensuring application completion and compliance with guidelines
- Award review
Scores applications based on objectives and criteria
- Funding review
Determines amount of funding to provide

Grant activities planned to begin in March



January 20th, Broadband Advisory Council Meeting

Line Extension Customer Assistance Program Progress



Program Statistics to date

- Received 228 applications, including 79 pending submission of income documentation
 - 77 have qualified as income-eligible
 - 23 projects currently under construction
 - 25 projects are complete

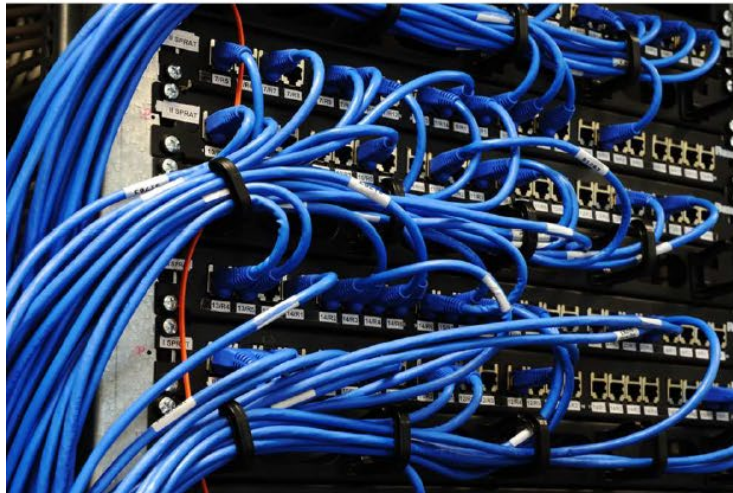
Participating Broadband Providers

Breezeline, Brightspeed, Citizens, Comcast*, Cox, ESVBA, PemTel, RiverStreet Networks, Virginia Technology Services, Kinex Telecom, Shentel, and Hosted Backbone/Port80.



January 20th, Broadband Advisory Council Meeting

Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act (IIJA) Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment Program



- Governor Youngkin has established DHCD as the lead on all IIJA Broadband Programs, including BEAD
- Approval of planning funds expected soon
 - Prepare VATI for BEAD funding
 - Explore workforce development needs
 - Help local governments plan for broadband affordability, adoption needs
- The timing depends on the Notice of Available Amounts and submission of Virginia's Initial Proposal
 - Anticipated allocation timeline pushed back by NTIA to by June 30, 2023



January 20th, Broadband Advisory Council Meeting

Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act (IIJA) Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment Program Virginia's Planning Grant Activities



\$5 million in planning funds received in late 2022

Planning Grant Activities

- Broadband Affordability and Adoption Planning Grants for Counties and Cities in Virginia
 - Coming Spring 2023!
- Adding Roles of Digital Opportunity Coordinator
- Consultant to recommend changes to VATI Program Guidelines and Criteria to Accommodate BEAD Guidance
- Consultant to recommend program frameworks and structures to address digital opportunity gaps
- Consultant to assess broadband workforce development ecosystem and opportunities for scalability



January 20th, Broadband Advisory Council Meeting

- HB1752/SB1029 establishes standardized fees and timelines for approving rail crossings
- Recent editorial from Gary Wood in [The Daily Progress](#)
- One version of bill has made it out of committee





Developing a Consent Agenda



Developing a Consent Agenda

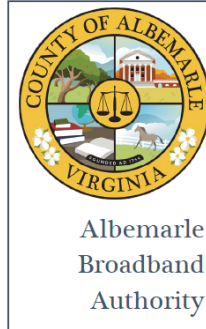
- Develop Current FY baseline
- Standardize retirement of exhausted funds
- Removes financial reporting from regular agenda
- Can be pulled by members for discussion

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Developing a Consent Agenda

- Shift to BAAO for reporting, aligning with authorship and increased role
- Maintains existing opportunities for distributing drafts and receiving feedback
- Maintains ABBA Chair discussion
- Can be pulled by members for discussion



Albemarle
Broadband
Authority

Broadband Status Report 4th Quarter CY2022

December 21, 2022

The Albemarle Broadband Authority (ABBA) reviewed and is submitting the Broadband Status Report for the third quarter of calendar year 2022 (October 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022). The report is provided to the County of Albemarle, VA Board of Supervisors as information. This report provides summary level information on all activities completed and underway by ABBA. Here is this quarter's *From the Chair*:

Work with Brightspeed, formerly CenturyLink, on VATI 2021 continues to bring challenges but is proceeding. The Department of Housing and Community Development engaged in cooperative action plan to address the



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- a) Strategy to Create Two Consent Items (Monthly Financial Report; BAAO Quarterly Report to Board of Supervisors)

8. Adjourn

Jason Inofuentes

From: Gary Wood <gwood@MyCVEC.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 25, 2023 4:07 PM
To: Michael Culp; Jason Inofuentes
Cc: Galen Creekmore; Melissa Gay; Dennis Reece
Subject: Quick update on CVEC fiber build and Firefly build outside of CVEC territory in Albemarle

CAUTION: This message originated outside the County of Albemarle email system. DO NOT CLICK on links or open attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.

Mike:

Before the ABBA meeting tonight I thought you might want a quick update on the fiber projects we have going in Albemarle County.

CVEC has completed its fiber placement and splicing for the backbone of the network with the exception of a single span of fiber across Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks near Red Hill. The crossing is keeping us from connecting anyone at Red Hill and has been the holdup now for several months. We have received word that everything is ready to go except they haven't scheduled any flaggers yet. We are at their mercy until they decide to put us on the schedule.

The final service drops and connections are underway in the White Hall area and will start soon in the Schuyler area. Red Hill will be put into the hopper as soon as we get that crossing.

Take rates based on preregistration for the final three areas of the CVEC build:

White Hall - 860 registrations/1450 passings, 60% take rate

Red Hill - 270 registrations/465 passings 58% take rate, some fiber already in place from others is some subdivisions on Old Lynchburg Road

Schuyler - 200 registrations/370 passings 54% take rate, about half of these are in Albemarle County and the rest in Nelson. There is some fiber already in this area as well.

Generally, as we begin making final connections and the community sees our trucks in the area we see another 5 to 10% of homes register.

In the APCo territory from Taylors Creek and Heards Mountain east across Rt 29 to Red Hill we have about 85 miles of fiber to build. APCo's schedule indicates they will complete make ready and turn this area over for construction by end of February. If that happens we will build our fiber over the next two months after the APCo release, more or less, and then splice and make final connections. This project will pass another 850 or so locations.

Dominion continues to work on their middle mile planning with field work and engineering. They will need to speak to their schedule but I think they plan to begin construction in Albemarle in 2023.

We will bring fiber in on the Red Hill system adjacent to the White Hall area later this year as well.

We are still awaiting the announcement of awards for the 2023 VATI program.

Firefly is on track to make our 20,000th connection in the next six to eight weeks. We have come a long way from our first connection in January of 2019. An important contributor to our success has been the support of the counties who

understand the need for broadband for their residents, and Albemarle was an early leader in finding solutions. We appreciate our partnership!

Thanks,

Gary



Broadband
Accessibility and
Affordability
Office

Strategic Priorities – Year 2

Introduction: Established to expand capacity to administer broadband expansion projects and to improve broadband affordability in the County, the Broadband Accessibility and Affordability Office has established plans to accomplish its primary goals.

With universal broadband access imminent and the establishment of programs that direct County funds to provide subsidies to monthly broadband costs for low-income households, future efforts must be guided by strategic goal-setting.

This document seeks to review the office's existing strategic goals, progress on those goals, and to define future strategic priorities and goals.

Current Mission Statement: The Office seeks to accomplish the County's mission by ensuring residents of all means have access to adequate and affordable broadband service.

Background: The key words in the existing mission statement are 'access,' 'affordable,' and 'adequate.' It is necessary and important to define these terms.

A community member can be said to have broadband **access** when internet service is available to their home that meets the FCC's definition for 'broadband,' which at present is set at 100 Mbps download speed and 20 Mbps upload speed.

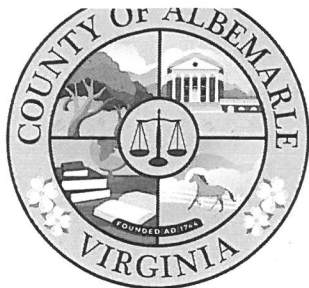
Broadband service is **affordable** when residents do not need to forego other essential costs in order to pay for monthly or other costs for internet service.

Broadband service is **adequate** when the service provided is sufficient to meet all of the residents needs.

Current Objectives: The office established two primary objectives to accomplish its mission.

- 1) Facilitate establishment of a broadband expansion project that would establish universal broadband access throughout the County.
- 2) Establish a broadband affordability program that would significantly decrease broadband costs for low-income residents.

Current Progress: On the first objective, the Office coordinated with the Albemarle Broadband Authority and the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Committee in a Virginia Telecommunications Initiative award that will achieve universal access in this and several other counties in the region. This project is a partnership with Firefly Fiber Broadband and will be completed by 2025.



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Office

Strategic Priorities – Year 2

Significant administrative work remains to complete this project, though ABBA's role is as a pass-through with the TJPDC serving as the primary administrator for the award.

Regarding affordability programs, our office has worked to promote the Federal Communications Commission's Affordable Connectivity Program in partnership with community organizations and the County's Department of Social Services. This program provides up to \$30 per month to eligible households towards monthly broadband costs.

We have also begun promotion and coordination of the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's Line Extension Customer Assistance Program, which covers the complete cost of extending service to individual households based on a simple income eligibility threshold.

Additionally, our office has worked to establish municipal broadband affordability supplements to make a direct impact on digital inclusion and broadband affordability for low-income households. The efforts have taken shape in two programs, the Internet Essentials Partnership Program and the ACP Bridge program.

The Internet Essentials Partnership Program provides eligible residents with no-cost Comcast internet service for residents in the Comcast service area. The program provides options for initiating service quickly through a simple web portal and a promotional code. This program will be coordinated in partnership with community organizations that will refer residents to us for application and screening.

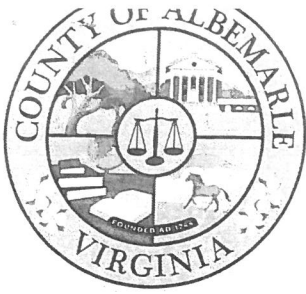
In order to enhance the benefit provided by the Affordable Connectivity Program, our office established the ACP Bridge program, which provides up to an additional \$20 towards monthly broadband costs. This program is currently enrolling service providers to participate and is collecting applicants for enrollment when relevant service providers are included.

Our office estimates that over 8,200 Albemarle County households are eligible for ACP, though only 1,600 have enrolled. In addition to our supplementary programs, we intend to continue to expand ACP enrollment.

Forward looking: It is the expectation of this office that the two primary objectives established for its work will be accomplished within the net two years based on the existing efforts.

Future work for this office must be considered to be focused on adequacy, rather than merely access, and strive for a focus on digital inclusion that moves beyond basic infrastructure and affordability. These efforts hinge on three strategic priorities.

- Digital Literacy
- Digital Parity



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Strategic Priorities – Year 2

- Digital Evolution

In addition to these strategic priorities, the Office has established four goals to strive for in this coming year. The following sections describe these three lenses and then the established goals.

Digital Literacy: Commonly defined as an 'individual's ability to find, evaluate, and communicate information' using digital media, digital literacy is best understood in the broader context. Someone that has extensive using software in a professional setting that predates widespread adoption of the internet can be considered digitally illiterate in the same way as someone who has never used a tablet or smartphone.

In the administration of fiber broadband expansion projects, this office frequently interacts with residents who have lived for decades with the scale and technology framework of their DSL service. That technology is two orders of magnitude slower than the service they will soon receive. This can create a gap in comprehending the capabilities and requirements of this shift in technology.

Residents with sufficient context and access to broadband may still struggle to utilize digital services due to many barriers. Digital literacy efforts strive to overcome all variety of these barriers through culturally aware resources that address individual needs.

The intensity of this type of training requires organizations that with a high level of trust in a community and extensive staff resources. The diverse digital literacy needs suggests that the correct approach is to build a regional coalition of organizations, pooling resources so that each organization can expand its ability to serve its communities.

Key partners in this effort will include the University of Virginia, Albemarle County Public School system, the City of Charlottesville, Piedmont Virginia Community College, the Jefferson Area Board of Aging, the Jefferson-Madison Regional Library, the Piedmont Housing Association of Residents, and other organizations engaged in digital literacy work in the region.

Digital Parity: Although Albemarle County will achieve universal access by 2025, the fabric of digital access is a patchwork. Some areas of the County have excellent cellular broadband coverage across numerous providers, while others have no coverage at all. Some areas of the County have multiple fast and reliable broadband options, while others have a single provider with reliability concerns.

Layering these conditions together and you see that some areas are replete with options and services, while others lack all but the most basic access. That circumstance will improve with universal access, but imbalances will continue to exist.

Future broadband expansion efforts will be focused on improving the parity between both ends of the spectrum, correcting inequities wrought by



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Strategic Priorities – Year 2

digital redlining that concentrates infrastructure investment in some areas while depriving others.

These efforts will continue the partnerships our office has engaged in with the Commonwealth's Broadband Office and service providers, while also working to expand our capacity to utilize every mechanism for encouraging providers to invest in underserved areas. These efforts will also extend our influence to areas we had not previously focused on, such as implications for emergency management, cellular coverage, and land-use planning.

Digital Evolution: The COVID-19 pandemic forced our economy, governments, work-places, and places-of-worship to fundamentally reconsider how to utilize digital services to persist in the face of a contagious illness. The long-term impacts of this frame shift will persist for years. One such shift was to compel the Federal government to invest in broadband at a scale last seen during rural electrification.

We do not know what the fabric of the internet will look like five years from now, just as the Albemarle Broadband Authority could not have known in 2020 that it was just five years from achieving its goal of universal access.

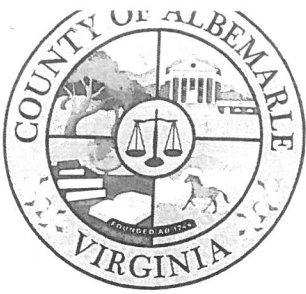
Preparing for the next evolution of digital services will involve incorporating broadband infrastructure into planning guidance the same way transportation and utility infrastructure is incorporated.

This means assessing the needs that can be expected from key development areas in the future, creating opportunities to meet those needs, and collaborating with community, private and governmental stakeholders to ensure those needs are met. This also means reassessing the way broadband infrastructure is managed by local governments, creating frameworks for local governments to monitor and inform the public of outages and network impediments.

Broadband access has become an integral part of how our community operates in all facets of life, it is incumbent on local governments to do what they can to ensure these networks our communities are built on are sufficient and reliable.

Goals: The office has prepared a set of goals to be advanced during the office's second fiscal year. These goals contribute to the strategic priorities that will guide future work of the office.

- 1) Develop a Regional Digital Equity Plan – With universal access soon to be achieved, largely as a result of significant investments in our rural area, future expansions will focus on the Development Area and should be coordinated with community stakeholders including the University of Virginia and the City of Charlottesville. Developing a Regional Digital Equity Plan will allow future efforts to be informed by a comprehensive community assessment that includes assets from the three largest bodies serving our community, and input from all perspectives.



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Office

Strategic Priorities – Year 2

Work on this effort will begin with outreach to principals at the University and the City, along with community organizations working to advance issues of equity and digital inclusion. A focus on community engagement and asset mapping will govern much of the early work and draft work on a plan may be available by the end of the Fiscal Year.

- 2) Develop Service Level Metrics – As part of the AC44 comprehensive plan process, County departments are tasked with preparing service level metrics that establish the distinct service levels for rural area and development areas, along with special needs for other land use categories. Our office will begin working on preparing broadband service level metrics that take into account our strategic priorities and have a 20-year time horizon. The work will involve industry research and engagement with various community stakeholders including representatives from economic development, centers for learning, public health, and residents. These goals will be delivered to meet the AC44 timeline, however they will be reassessed frequently as work towards strategic priorities continues.
- 3) Development of Parity Metrics – Though service level metrics will define differences between land use categories, it is also important to establish ways that broadband resources should be distributed equitably across the County's entire area. This work will contribute to the asset mapping done in our first goal.

This work will include an assessment of which areas of the County's lack specific assets or features and determining relative demand for these features based on location. From there specific parity metrics can be derived and plans to improve those metrics can be developed. Among the first assessments will be an effort to assess cellular coverage areas throughout the County. Access to emergency services and the lack of cellular coverage are a key factor in our office's work to ensure rural area residents have access to copper telephony service. This assessment will guide work to improve cellular coverage in the County.

- 4) Pilot Open Access Conduit Project – Innovative approaches to broadband infrastructure deployment will enable our office to achieve its strategic priorities. Among the greatest challenges for broadband deployments is the high cost associated with trenching or boring conduit for fiber to be run through.

This pilot project would serve as a proof of concept for providing municipally-owned telecommunications conduit in desirable locations where multiple providers can be collocated. This approach would decrease the deployment costs for expansion projects while also eliminating the need for ground and roadways to be disturbed each time a provider works to extend their service through an area.

If effective, this strategy could also provide the incentive for provider cooperation and collaboration in meeting additional strategic priorities. During the first phase of this project, our office will work to identify appropriate areas to trial this work, engage stakeholders to determine the



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best implementation strategies and cost-estimates and benefits, spending authority, funding mechanisms, and evaluation metrics.

Individual objectives for these goals should be established during project and policy development and progress should be assessed frequently by stakeholders and principals. Budgetary and staffing requirements necessary to meet these goals should be assessed and reported as a part of upcoming budget discussions. Necessary legislative authorizations should be assessed early and any deficits should be included during discussions by principals on County legislative priorities.