



# Albemarle County

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 15-014, **Version:** 1

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**AGENDA DATE:** 6/3/2015

**TITLE:**

Broadband Vision and Planning

**SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST:** Broadband Vision and Planning Update

**ITEM TYPE:** Consent Information Item

**STAFF CONTACT(S):** Foley, Letteri, Davis, Kamptner, Culp

**PRESENTER (S):** n/a

**LEGAL REVIEW:** Yes

**REVIEWED BY:** Thomas C. Foley

**BACKGROUND:**

On February 4, 2015, the Board took the following action:

- 1) Adopted a Resolution to commit \$30,000 in funding to complete a Community Connectivity Plan if the County is awarded the \$30,000 Community Connectivity Planning Grant through the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD); and
- 2) Approved an appropriation in the amount of \$3900 to contract with the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC) to assist in the writing of the Grant Application.

The purpose of this Executive Summary is to provide a progress update.

**STRATEGIC PLAN:**

Critical Infrastructure: Prioritize, plan and invest in critical infrastructure that responds to past and future changes and improves the capacity to serve community needs.

Educational Opportunities: Provide lifelong learning opportunities for all our citizens.

Operational Capacity: Ensure County government's ability to provide high quality service that achieves community priorities.

**DISCUSSION:**

TJPDC and County staff completed a grant application for Broadband Planning funds through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The recipients of the grant will receive \$30,000 to be used toward the completion of a Community Connectivity Plan focused on job creation for low and moderate income residents; specifically for rural area business development.

The application was submitted on March 16, 2015, but the DHCD has not yet advised staff of an award determination. The DHCD has indicated it will make a determination by September 30, 2015.

On April 21, 2015, the DHCD invited staff to participate in the Virginia Telecommunications Planning Initiative (VATPI). VATPI provides up to \$75,000 toward the completion of a Comprehensive Telecommunications Plan.

It differs from the CDBG broadband planning grant in that the plan creation includes residential broadband service planning. The application for VATPI funding is a two phase process without a match requirement, and staff decided to pursue it.

The first phase of the VATPI application includes holding a community broadband meeting, collecting data, and submitting a letter of interest to participate to the DHCD. The community broadband meeting took place on May 19, 2015 and a letter of interest was submitted to DHCD on May 22, 2015 (Attachment 1).

The second phase of the VATPI grant application process is open only to those localities whose letter of interest is reviewed favorably by the DHCD. If the County's letter of interest qualifies the application for the second phase, staff will be notified to attend a pre application meeting and will be provided direction regarding the required submission of a full proposal, which the DHCD will then review. Telecommunications Planning Funds are expected to be awarded in August of 2015.

If the County is awarded Telecommunications Planning funds, staff plans to release a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Telecommunications Planning Services by October 31, 2015. Staff plans to include broadband priorities in the RFP. The Telecommunications Plan can be focused on one or more priority areas. Staff will return to the Board at a future meeting with an analysis that will allow the Board to determine the County's broadband priorities.

**BUDGET IMPACT:** To date, the Board has appropriated \$3,900 to contract with the TJPDC to write the CDBG grant application and has committed an additional \$30,000 to complete a Community Connectivity Plan if the grant is awarded to the County.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

This executive summary is provided for the Board's information only, and no action is required.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1 - May 22, 2015 Letter of Interest submitted to the DHCD