



ITD

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Broadband JPA Referral # 2021.08 Report

July 20, 2021



Broadband JPA Referral Summary

- Explore potential of creating a Broadband Joint Powers Authority (JPA) to facilitate regional governance, strategy, collaboration and partnerships on closing the digital divide throughout Monterey County;
- Equitable geographic representation;
- Priority for unserved, underserved and disadvantaged communities;

Broadband JPA Referral – cont'd

- On June 8, 2021, Board approved considerations for additional governance structures:
 - a) A Broadband board with equitable geographic representation
 - b) A JPA (“light-weight JPA”) to contract and jointly exercise common powers, and work with community partners;
 - Not a separate legal entity, cannot own properties or issue bonds;
 - c) A JPA (“full JPA”) to form a separate legal entity, and work with community partners;
 - Can own properties and issue bonds;
 - Requires ongoing staffing and funding commitment;

Summary of ITD Efforts

- Recent discussions with City of Salinas, City of Gonzales, Monterey County Office of Education, AT&T, and continued discussions with Monterey Bay Economic Partnership and Central Coast Broadband Consortium;
- Topics of discussions
 - Identify sustainable issues;
 - Identify a community broadband operational model;
 - Lessons learned from previous regional efforts;

Summary of Findings

- Partners have varying broadband interests and areas of focus;
- There is a broadband workforce group being developed with Salinas Valley cities, Hartnell College and County Office of Education;
- Roughly about 30 attorney hours for an initial JPA agreement draft, and at least 6-12 months to finalize the setup;
- State budget includes a \$6 billion broadband plan funded by ARPA and general fund;
 - \$3.75 billion for an open-access middle-mile network, and \$2 billion for last-mile projects;
 - Pending more details;

Next Steps

- Form a community broadband Task Force group with an initial memorandum of understanding (MOU) to develop a shared vision on regional broadband effort, appropriate governance structure and a broadband strategic plan;
 - The Task Force group will include ITD, community partners such as CCBC and MBEP, interested cities, agencies and school districts;

Next Steps – cont'd

- The Task Force will:
 - Collaborate on regional broadband needs and identify coverage gaps;
 - Create a Monterey County strategic broadband plan;
 - Present at City Select Committee and Tri-County Administrators' meeting to gather interest from other cities and agencies;
 - Agree and implement the appropriate type of governance body;