



# ITD

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## Addressing the Digital Divide in Salinas & Throughout Monterey County Referral #2020.25 Report

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July 20, 2021



# *“Addressing the Digital Divide” Referral*

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- Collaborative efforts to address the digital divide in partnership with local schools, cities, and community partners;
- Advocate with FCC to regulate broadband access as a utility;
- Request and sponsor legislation for a universal broadband bond to be placed on the 2022 election ballot;
- A county-wide community survey on digital divide and affordable internet service;

# *Summary of ITD Collaborative Efforts*

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- Worked with CCBC, MBEP and proposed community broadband projects to Board on June 2, 2021
  - a) Board approved \$1.9 million in ARPA funds for FY 21-22;
  - b) Working with County Counsel to identify the appropriate mechanism to distribute funds equitably to qualified partners;
  - c) RFP to be released in July 2021;

## *Summary of ITD Collaborative Efforts – cont'd*

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- Regional broadband JPA discussions will be covered in a separate report and presentation in response to Board referral #2021.08

# *Summary of ITD Collaborative Efforts – cont'd*

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- Public Wi-Fi implementation
  - a) 24 County buildings to be equipped with public Wi-Fi that will benefit nearby County residents within 328 feet beyond building perimeter;
  - b) Most Library sites already have external public Wi-Fi. Public safety sites will be excluded;
  - c) Expected completion date around September 2021;

# *Summary of ITD Collaborative Efforts – cont'd*

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- Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBB)
  - Media briefing on April 21, 2021;
  - Board presentation on April 27, 2021;
  - “How to” guide published on County web site;

# *Summary of ITD Collaborative Efforts – cont'd*

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- “Dig Once” policy discussion with Public Works
  - a) Adopt a “Dig Once” policy as a County ordinance or resolution;
    - Will reduce the cost of building out internet access
    - Many municipal governments already doing it, including Salinas
  - b) Public Works to decide on ordinance versus resolution;
  - c) ITD to share other cities’ operation practices;

## *Summary of ITD Collaborative Efforts – cont'd*

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- Broadband strategic plan, RCRC grant application letter of support and MOU participation
  - a) Letter of support submitted to RCRC;
  - b) Future participation in the RCRC MOU for a County-wide broadband strategic plan development grant;



# *Summary of ITD Collaborative Efforts – cont'd*

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- Broadband development updates from providers
  - a) Inquiry sent to Charter, AT&T and Comcast on April 2, 2021;
  - b) Received updates from Charter Communications and AT&T;

## Charter Communications

Network upgrades completed for Laguna Seca area in November 2020

Carmel Highland upgrade expected to complete in July 2021

## AT&T

On site meeting with ITD on June 24, 2021

Fiber is available around Post Ranch in Big Sur area

# *Legislative Updates*

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- In November 2019, ITD provided public comments with letter of support to California Broadband Council in support of State Broadband Action Plan and advocate with FCC to regulate broadband access as a utility;
- State budget includes a \$6 billion for broadband improvement - pending more details;
  - \$3.75 billion for a statewide open-access middle-mile network
  - \$2 billion for last-mile projects

# *Community Broadband Survey*

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- CCBC/MBEP forwarded Community Broadband Survey by Governor's Office to members agencies and community partners - survey results pending

# *Request for Referral Closure and Next Steps*

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- Request Board to consider this referral being completed;
- ITD will report to Board quarterly on the community broadband project progress through its presentation on Board referral #2021.08 on broadband JPA;