



ITD

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

July 20, 2021



“Addressing the Digital Divide” Referral

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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

- “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

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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;