



Broadband Access

Board of County Commissioners Special Meeting

Growth Management Department
September 3, 2019



Background

- Definition of Broadband
 - Broadband is a high data-transmission, high-speed internet connection (at least 25 megabits/second downstream and 3 Mbps upstream)
- Issue Paper presented to County Commission May 1, 2018
No specific policy direction; City Broadband study in progress at time
- Comprehensive Plan Transmittal Hearing June 25, 2019 included the following direction:
 - *Staff provide policies regarding Broadband internet access to discuss at a policy meeting to incorporate into the revisions to the Comprehensive Plan.*



Broadband Accessibility

Gainesville Community Broadband Study: Analysis of market potential for retail fiber network with lowest broadband price in US (\$50/mo)

- CCG Consulting presented results to Gainesville City Commission on June 20, 2019
- General Government and GRU staff reviewing Study results, conclusions, and recommendations. Report to City Commission in October 2019 on legal, financial, issues
- Letter from Mayor to community institutions (County, municipalities, School Board, SFC, UF, etc.) seeking partnerships for broadband expansion



Broadband Accessibility

Adopted Policies: Comprehensive Plan

Future Land Use Element

Policy 1.5.3 New residential developments shall provide for the provision of high speed internet access as specified in the land development regulations.

Economic Element

Policy 1.5.3 The County shall pursue funding opportunities, including grants and other funding sources, for the extension of essential infrastructure to encourage development or redevelopment in specific economically distressed areas identified in the “Understanding Racial Inequity In Alachua County” Report (2018).



Broadband Accessibility

Considerations:

- Gainesville Community Broadband Study



Broadband Accessibility

Considerations:

- Changing/emerging technology
- Guiding vision for Broadband strategy



Broadband Accessibility

Broadband Strategic Plan: Best Practices

- *Make plans as comprehensive as possible.*
- *Develop a community vision.*
- *Consider other infrastructures and large-scale community needs.*
- *Consider existing providers, their networks, and future needs as well as government actors on various levels.*
- *Understand user requirements.*



Broadband Accessibility

Variety of Community Approaches:

- Regional Planning and Community Coalitions
- Leveraging of Federal Stimulus funds
- USDA ReConnect grants
- State Funding
- Private Sector providers (Google, Microsoft)



Policy Options

- Direct staff to revise Economic Element policies as follows:

Policy 1.5.3 The County shall pursue funding opportunities, including grants and other funding sources, for the extension of essential infrastructure **including high-speed internet accessibility** to encourage development or redevelopment in specific economically distressed areas identified in the “Understanding Racial Inequity In Alachua County” Report (2018)).

New Policy It is a goal of Alachua County for high-speed internet access to be available throughout the County as a means to encourage economic development, enhance education and healthcare access, facilitate inclusion and engagement of citizens, promote planning and resilience, and enhance public safety and emergency response.

New Policy The County should develop a Strategic Plan for broadband accessibility and pursue opportunities and partnerships to facilitate high-speed internet accessibility throughout unincorporated Alachua County.



Broadband Accessibility

Board Discussion & Questions



For More Information

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