



Department Source: City Manager

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: April 1, 2019

Re: Resolution Creating a Broadband Business Planning Task Force

Executive Summary

In 2013, a Broadband Planning Study was commissioned to understand options for improving current and future broadband services within the community. Magellan Advisors was chosen to perform a Broadband Needs Assessment & Planning Study which they completed in 2014. The two main recommendations were to implement public policy tools and develop a Broadband Business Plan. Since their 2014 report, several of the incumbent internet service providers have deployed enhanced offerings to areas of Columbia. In December of 2015 the City of Columbia contracted with Magellan Advisors to update their 2014 report. This update report was completed in February 2017. Magellan recommended the development of a broadband business plan to outline how to move forward.

At this time, staff is proposing the formation of a Broadband Business Planning Task Force. This proposed working group would include community stakeholders, a City Council Member and City Staff.

Discussion

In 2013, The City of Columbia's Economic Development Department, Water & Light Department and University of Missouri joined to commission a Broadband Planning Study to understand options for improving current and future broadband services within the community. Magellan Advisors was chosen to perform a Broadband Needs Assessment & Planning Study. With the ability to leverage Water & Light's fiber-optic network, the study examined potential opportunities for the City to expand use of this network to foster next-generation broadband services for the residents, businesses and community anchor institutions.

Magellan determined that the City may want to consider expanding its current fiber-optic network to broaden the service offerings provided throughout the community. The current network was considered an asset that could be enhanced with additional funding commitments and further build out.

Magellan recommended that the City investigate implementing public policy tools and developing a Broadband Business Plan. The development of a comprehensive Broadband Business Plan would lay out the business, market, technical, and operational strategies for the City to use in further development of its network. The business plan would determine total costs for construction, operation, and management of the network.



City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

Since Magellan's 2014 report, several of the incumbent internet service providers have deployed enhanced offerings to areas of Columbia. In December of 2015 the City of Columbia contracted with Magellan Advisors to update their 2014 report. To update their report, Magellan completed a current broadband market analysis and a field verification survey.

Magellan's market analysis assessed the services that were available, providers, service level, pricing, and access levels for broadband services within the City of Columbia. They have documented the privately owned networks in Columbia and created broadband maps to illustrate how Columbia is served by broadband and through which providers. Magellan met with each identified provider to document the infrastructure changes that have occurred since the previous sets of meetings.

Over the past several years, several Missouri State legislative bills have been proposed to prohibit or limit municipalities from offering broadband internet services. Some of them would have prohibited municipalities from providing certain services already being provided within the boundaries of the municipality without a vote of the people. Other proposed bills specified when it would be permissible for a city, town, or village to offer competitive services. None of these bills have been enacted into law as of this time.

Staff recommends establishing a Broadband Business Planning Task Force to work with a consultant and execute the following scope:

- A. Understand current and possible future state and federal regulations governing broadband communications for municipalities
- B. Understand Columbia's fiber optic system and service offerings to customers
- C. Understand the current offerings by incumbent service providers and any opportunities for public/private partnerships
- D. Formulate and recommend a Broadband Business Plan detailing the following:
 - i. The business model to be used
 - ii. The market segment(s) to be served
 - iii. The technology and equipment to be deployed
 - iv. The operational strategies
 - V. Personnel and equipment needs
 - vi. The costs for construction, operation, and management of the plan
 - vii. The timeline that the City of Columbia should use for build out
 - viii. A comprehensive financial and funding plan

A seven member Task Force appointed by the City Council is being proposed for this working group. The seven member Task Force would be comprised of a mix of representation from different potential customer user groups and other community stakeholders. The following stakeholder interests being proposed for this working group are residential, commercial, industrial, incumbent service provider (fully deployed), incumbent service provider (growing), and the University of Missouri.



The task force shall be provided staff support by City Utilities with additional staff support provided by Information Technology, Economic Development and the Law Department as deemed necessary from time to time.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: N/A

Long-Term Impact: N/A

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Not Applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Not applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Legislative History

Date	Action
8/18/2014	REP 76-14 Broadband Planning Study
7/17/2017	REP 59-17 Broadband Market Analysis Update
6/4/2018	REP 47-18 City Fiber Optic Business Plan Report

Suggested Council Action

Authorize creation of the Broadband Business Planning Task Force.