



Chatham County, NC

Legislation Text

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Receive Update on Chatham County Broadband and discuss next steps on Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) Grant funding

Introduction & Background: Broadband is an important issue for the Board of Commissioners and the public. With additional funding opportunities and changes in the environment, this update will serve as an update on the environment of broadband in Chatham County. Additionally, with the Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) Grant program quickly approaching, this will include a discussion on allocating additional funding for a program match with restricted American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.

Discussion & Analysis: Provide direction on additional Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) program funding.

With further constraints being placed on restricted ARPA funds, the county anticipates a spending shortfall of approximately \$2 million dollars within the restricted ARPA funding available to the county. The application of this remaining available funding, or a portion of it, can be transformational in the county's efforts, and limited ability, to expand reliable high-speed internet access to parts of the county that may not otherwise be served.

The intent of this agenda item is to seek direction from the Board of Commissioners on the use of these remaining restricted funds considering broadband grant opportunities through the state's CAB program, and in consideration of and alignment with Board priorities.

How does this relate to the Comprehensive Plan: This item relates to Objective 7: Provide infrastructure to support desired development and support economic and environmental objectives. Additionally, this item is relevant to the following:

- Health recommendation HL Policy 10, Strategy 10.1: Healthcare providers are reaching more people through online services and resources, emphasizing prevention through education and training. With access to broadband, County residents can improve personal health with information as well as connections to healthcare professionals (i.e., virtual doctor visits).
- Health recommendation HL Policy 11, Strategy 11.3: Expand access to broadband (for virtual workplaces, which expand opportunity)
- Resiliency Recommendation 2 Resiliency Policy 5, Strategy 5.1: Recruit jobs and increase access to broadband to reduce the rate of out-commuting.
- Utilities and Public Service Action Item 4: Explore grant funds and partnerships to expand broadband internet coverage.

Budgetary Impact: The prospective budgetary impact on this item is additional funding from restricted American Rescue Plan Act allocated, that otherwise is unallocated, to the North Carolina Department of Information Technology's, Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) Grant Program.

Recommendation/Motion: Receive broadband information and provide direction on additional funding from restricted American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) for Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) Grant Program match.