

City Broadband Working Group

Meeting Notes

May 21st, 2015

3:30-5:30pm, Westview Conference Room, 3065 Center Green Drive

Attendees:

- City
 - Carl Castillo, Policy Advisor
 - Casey Earp , Assistant City Manager 1, Joining via Telephone
 - Liz Hanson, Economic Vitality Coordinator
 - Don Ingle, Director of IT
 - Myles Wallingford, Economic Vitality Intern
- Working Group
 - Claire Carlin, BVSD Student
 - Angelique Espinoza, Boulder Chamber of Commerce
 - Dale Hatfield, Silicon Flatirons Center
 - Ken Leiden, Boulder Resident
 - Christopher Meier, CU School of Law Graduate
 - Andrew Moore, BVSD CIO
- Public
 - Bob Wells, Linux.com

Meeting Notes:

1) Preliminaries

Don Ingle reviewed the agenda with the group and no one noted any concerns. The group introduced themselves to Casey Earp.

Don went over recent updates.

- Don noted Comcast's announcement that they will offer 2 GB service in Boulder. The group planned to discuss implications of this.
- Free public Wi-Fi is now operational in the Civic area.
- City staff are proposing budgets for the City. IT has put forth funding proposals for additional outdoor wireless locations.
- Don noted that the City is currently restricted to putting wireless transmitters on buildings.
- Andrew Moore noted that BVSD is considering a ballot initiative to expand their fiber capabilities/ connectivity issues.
- Don noted that, since the ballot initiative, consulting firms have expressed interest in conducting feasibility studies. Comcast has indicated plans to catalyze Wi-Fi with existing infrastructure.

Don asked if the group had responses to Joann Hovis's presentation from the last working group meeting.

- Tim O'Shea said Joann's statements about cities owning infrastructure as was important. Tim noted how Joann reviewed several case studies and methodologies pertaining to

current and early phases of broadband provision. He noted that Google Fiber is now registered to conduct business in Colorado.

- Don again noted that Joann Hovis' firm is under contract with the City and provided design support for the Civic Area wireless. As such, the city was aware of her expertise and felt her to be a good educational resource for the Working Group. If the city issues an RFP for broadband design services, her firm will be subject to open, objective competition with other candidate firms.
- Dale Hatfield asked how far up the protocol stack the City plans to be. He said there is a difference in risk between owning fiber and owning electronics. Dale noted people's concern over ownership at higher levels in the protocol stack and tax payers are less concerned with putting in physical infrastructure than providing a service that may become obsolete.
- Don said a private partner might finance and build the last mile. No municipalities that have been reviewed released ownership of infrastructure that was used as backhaul in middle mile construction. Chris Meier noted that Joann gave examples given of open access.

Don discussed Century Link's announcement about their effort to connect businesses in Boulder. Comcast is offering 2 GB of service in Boulder in summer 2015. Don asked if representatives from both companies should come to the next meeting. The group agreed. Tim suggested also bringing in a representative from Zayo Group.

- Liz Hanson questioned if service price might help gauge the market. Tim discussed pricing per gigabit for these prospective broadband providers.
- Don noted that broadband providers are concerned about counties exempting themselves from SB 152.
- Andrew mentioned Comcast's attempt to buy Time Warner. This failed to pass, so there is less FCC oversight to protect school districts
- Don noted that competition is a goal of the working group.

2) Review of Draft Vision Document

Liz facilitated this part of the discussion. Liz mentioned that the vision can guide discussion of the group, but is subject to change as objectives shift. Don said the vision statement sets the foundation for topics that the working group will discuss. He asked the group to think about the goal for the working group. Liz solicited feedback about the existing vision statement draft.

The working group discussed the draft term "locally managed." Members of the group suggested wording that implied the City had influence over how assets are utilized in order to benefit the broader community. Dale said "network management" is an engineering term and could confuse people.

Liz directed focus to another highlighted item about providing access to a gigabit or higher infrastructure. She asked the group about quantifying broadband aspirations.

- The group discussed the difficulty in predicting future broadband capabilities and infrastructure requirements and how service and capabilities will evolve over time. Tim suggested the term "gigabit class" instead of a value.
- Angelique Espinoza thought part of the ballot measure was about using existing fiber infrastructure. Andrew said BVSD is maxed out at 1 GB. Don said the city has never replaced fiber infrastructure.

Liz asked if the vision should reference Wi-Fi service.

- Andrew thought the vision should be generic; Wi-Fi is complimentary to broadband.
- Dale thought both visitors and residents should be included; Don added “visitors” to the vision statement.

Liz asked about whether the vision should reflect a timeframe goal for broadband service provision.

- The group discussed including a timeframe to indicate a sense of urgency, but without appearing overambitious or aggressive in timing anticipations. It was noted that people voted to have service, not to have conduit put in place. Liz said an operational analysis would allow the group to make a more accurate projection. The group discussed that the vision be more vague until more information is obtained.
- Liz suggested putting a date on the vision statement to indicate that it is an initial document.
- Ken Leiden amended the vision statement to include the utilization of existing infrastructure.
- Angelique thought it would be best to not include a timeline, but indicate a desire to do it as soon as possible.
- Liz suggested the group indicate a timeline of one to two years. Tim recommended a timeline of 18-36 months.

Liz requested that the work group members send in comments to the final draft before it is posted.

3) Review of Broadband Feasibility Study Purpose

Don said funding has been put aside for the City to solicit a Broadband feasibility study. The study would help the City increase their knowledge of different business models and engineering considerations. Don gave an overview of the anticipated study. He said he would like the vision statement to be used as a performance metric in the study.

The feasibility study would help the City review current broadband supply and potential demand for broadband and broadband products. In light of municipalization, IT hopes to discover the effects on broadband infrastructure. Another objective of the study is to discover ways to increase provider competition and enable public/ private sector service.

Information from the RFP develops a preliminary engineering/ financial analysis in which to evaluate a private partner’s potential to provide fiber-to-the-premise (FTTP) in a pilot project. Don stated that the City hopes to select a final partner in July or August and work would continue with them into the new year. Don noted that the topic of Broadband is scheduled for a study session in November to give City Council an update on this process.

Don asked the group what they thought of the proposed next steps.

- Tim and others approved of the steps and timeline of the study and RFP.
- Don guessed the preliminary information from the RFP would be released late in the third quarter or early in the fourth quarter before the City Council update.
- Dale noted that demand cannot be considered without price and price elasticity is influenced by multiple operators. Liz asked if companies can decide to release a network at any price without using the City’s fiber. Dale said yes, and the market changes when companies move in. Tim said prices become competitive when the city has multiple providers. He questioned the benefit of a municipal network in helping private partners expand their offerings. Liz mentioned how private providers may not serve the entire

community or be affordable. Tim thought that City broadband could lead to competition with and amongst private partners.

- Dale said that municipal ownership is not the goal; connecting people to gigabit speed is the goal. The group agreed.
- Chris thought it may be necessary to have a consultant review the feasibility of finalist's proposals.

4) Summary and Follow Ups

The group supported releasing a request for proposals by June 1st. Don said he would refine the vision statement and solicit feedback.

Dale noted a conference in August being put on by Zayo Group and will discuss municipal infrastructure.

Don said he would work on obtaining guest speakers for the next meeting on June 18th, 2015 at 3:30 pm, but might need schedule flexibility from Working Group members depending on vendor availability.

The meeting concluded at 5:26 p.m.