BROADBAND ADVISORY WORKGROUP: PURPOSE AND MISSION

The purpose and mission of the Broadband Advisory Workgroup (BAW) is to evaluate, as an option, municipally owned broadband infrastructure considering current regulations/policies and financial costs and benefits to improve availability, affordability, equitability, and quality of broadband access across the community. Existing broadband infrastructure shall be assessed as well as projections for an expanded and upgraded network to meet community needs.

GOAL

The findings from the above will be reported to the City and include recommendations on how to proceed so that the City Council can hold informed public discussions on a broadband infrastructure policy.

PURPOSE AND MISSION (outline form)

Evaluate the possibility of municipally owned broadband infrastructure access across the community.

- Broadband – define: technologies that provide high speed internet access and other advanced telecommunication services to end users?
- Greater availability/accessibility – what is needed, define
- Affordability – what is affordable, define
- Equitability – what is equitable, define
- Quality – define quality, performance

Address:

- Policy considerations (does this include local, state & federal regulations?)
- Financial costs
- Potential Benefits (to consumers? municipality? others?)
- Potential Detriments (i.e., increases in property values and/or taxes, and influxes of higher-wage workers, which could result in increased costs of living for Bellingham residents)
- Cybersecurity & privacy (not a consideration in the original statement)
- Upgradability of proposed infrastructure
- Maintenance of the proposed infrastructure

Assess current:

- Existing City fiber infrastructure
- Equity, quality, and affordability, and reliability of the current broadband options available in the City of Bellingham and Urban Growth Area

Assess expanded and upgraded network to meet community needs:

There are six primary municipal network design approaches:

- Full service
- Open access
- Dark fiber leasing
- Incremental expansion
- Private-public partnerships
- Public-public partnerships

Deliverables:

1. RFP, including, primarily, the Scope of Work
2. Review RFP responses, and provide advice to the Mayor
3. Consultant report on all the above
4. Broadband Advisory Workgroup's overview statement of our findings and recommendations to the City so that the City Council can hold public discussions on a broadband infrastructure policy.

Gray shading indicates suggestions made at the 2.16.21 meeting

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