



**Municipal Broadband for Arlington**

# ArlFiber Proposals

1. Form a **broadband authority** to give County more **flexibility** and **opportunities** in using ConnectArlington network;
2. Conduct a rigorous **feasibility study** on using a broadband authority to leverage existing public network to build a **county-owned, county-wide, fiber-to-the-home** network that:
  - Has a mission to provide **high-speed, reliable, and affordable** service to all residents and businesses that want it;
  - Ensures **net neutrality** and **protects privacy**;
  - Puts **COMMUNITY** over short-term profits;

# Broadband Problems

1. High price for mediocre internet;
2. Insufficient competition, de facto monopolies;
3. Captured subscribers – commercial buildings and multitenant residences;
4. Persistent digital divide, 16% without home access;
5. Existing public network inhibited by state law, which restricted options during pandemic;
6. \$500K to Comcast for inadequate service in a videoconference-heavy home environment.

# Broadband Authorities

- Formed under the Virginia Wireless Service Authority Act (§ 15.2-5431.1 et seq.);
- Around 34 and counting formed in VA (can be formed by multiple localities jointly);
- BAs have broad authority to undertake and own projects, issue revenue bonds, borrow, charge for services provided, enter into contracts;
- BAs provide high speed data and Internet access services (but not cable TV)
- Legal ability to provide service to private entities upheld by SCC in 2019 (CASE NO. PUR-2018-00200);
- Formed by holding a public hearing, passing a resolution, and sending the paperwork onto SCC for registration (~3-4 months).

# Federal Funds Could Support Projects

## U.S. Treasury Guidelines for Broadband Infrastructure Projects:

- Encourages allocating money to not-for-profit providers;
- Encourages use of “future proof” fiber for the last mile;
- Connection that reliably meets standard of 100 mbps down/20 up, scalable to symmetrical 100/100 mbps;
- Prioritizes underserved (localities can determine);
- Encourages connection to businesses and anchor institutions;
- Project may include already served to increase economic feasibility.

# County-owned, all-fiber network for Arlington

- Market failure indicates need for increased competition from a new entrant that will treat broadband as essential infrastructure and vital utility;
- 83 municipal networks managing publicly-owned fiber across 148 communities;
- These networks routinely provide faster, cheaper service than dominant ISPs;
- More responsive and better customer service;
- Robust, proactive digital equity programs;
- Funded by subscriber fees and revenue bonds.

# ArlFiber October Forum

## arlfiber.org



**BENEFITS OF  
COMMUNITY  
BROADBAND**

**Monday, October 4 • 7:00- 8:30 PM, EST**

**Online Zoom Room:**

**<https://tinyurl.com/ArlFiberForum2021>**



**Deb Socia**  
President & CEO  
The Enterprise Center  
Chattanooga, TN



**Brad Nosler**  
General Manager  
HiLight  
Hillsboro, OR



**Bruce Patterson**  
Director of Solution Services  
EntryPoint Networks  
Ammon, ID



**Daniel Jones**  
Chief Information Officer  
Portsmouth, VA



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# Example: Hillsboro, OR “Bridge”

## Bridging The Digital Divide

### Core Values

Build community  
Create opportunity  
Keep it simple  
Live equity  
Serve the city we love

 Hillsboro |  Light

### Bridge

- 1 Gigabit Speed
- Wi-Fi Management Included
- No Installation Fee

**Just \$10 Per Month**

Bridge participants requalify after twelve months



# CONCLUSIONS

- Form an authority;
- Conduct a rigorous feasibility study on community broadband;
- Design digital equity projects with eye to scaling up.