

Goochland County

10 Steps to Broadband
Internet Initiatives



Goal

Goochland County believes universal broadband internet access is essential for our community to support business, education endeavors, public safety, and everyday life. Therefore, we support the implementation of diverse Broadband/Internet strategies to provide all interested Goochland citizens access and options for universal service provision consistent with goals set by the Governor's Chief Broadband Advisor. While Goochland County seeks service for the entire county, providers are encouraged to prioritize efforts to focus on unserved areas before underserved areas.

Speed

The preferred speeds, at a minimum, are 25Mbps / 3Mbps speeds for broadband service. This is the industry standard for fixed broadband speed published by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in the 2019 Broadband Deployment Report. It is also the minimum broadband speed recognized by most federal and state broadband funding opportunities.

Where satellite and mobile wireless broadband are the only option for the purposes of this initiative they are not solely considered as sustainable broadband/internet options.

Delivery Methods

We envision a diverse network delivery consisting of multiple fiber and wireless options dependent on existing infrastructure and geography.

Cost

The most attractive proposals for broadband service will be ones that provide services at market rate or other reasonable price points that will take into account the underserved and lower income needs of some Goochland citizens. Consideration will also be given for customer choice and options for various service levels.

Regulation

Internet service provision is unregulated, and all providers are encouraged to provide service options to Goochland residents.

Strategies to Facilitate Achievement

I. Administrative Resources – Investment of Dedicated Staff Resources

- Administrative Services Manager will dedicate 1/3 of his time to facilitate grant applications, build coalitions, foster relationships with providers, serve as a liaison between residents and providers, and conduct data collection, etc. to accomplish. In addition, the County Administrator, the Deputy County Administrator for Community & Economic Development, and the County Information Technology Director will support county efforts to educate, encourage, and facilitate the expansion of broadband solutions to our residents.
- The county will continue to pursue legislative advocacy efforts with our state and federal representatives to eliminate barriers and increase resource availability for providers to expand broadband infrastructure.
- Form a local broadband advisory team consisting of county staff and community partner representatives including Goochland County Public Schools, the Pamunkey Regional Library, Reynolds Community College, Goochland County Economic Development, and Goochland County Fire-Rescue. The advisory team will meet throughout the year to discuss initiative plans and progress.



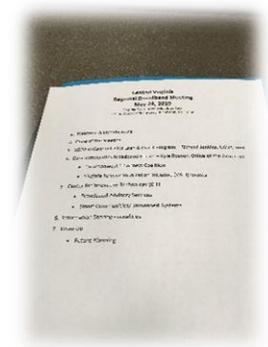
II. Focus Efforts of Regional Workgroup

Serve as regional leader to facilitate regional cooperation and solutions. Goochland has organized and hosted regional meetings on broadband for three years. Continue to host the workgroup meetings with Ashland, Charles City, Chesterfield, Cumberland, Fluvanna, Hanover, Louisa, New Kent, Powhatan, and PlanRVA. Previous meetings have included discussions with providers, representatives from the Governor's Office, Commonwealth of Virginia's Broadband Team, Center for Innovative Technology, and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development office.



III. Citizen & Business Resources

- Website containing plans*
- Updates on county progress*
- Improved Maps*
- List of providers offering service*
- Community Survey – broadband availability/need*
- Speed test opportunities for residents to share speeds of existing service
- Identify ways to report issues to broadband & cellular providers
- Interactive form to report broadband & cellular need/issues
- Develop a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)
- Economic Development staff will discuss broadband availability/needs during business visitations



** All will be available in print copies as well*

IV. Increased Local Access (\$50,000 Investment)

Establish enhanced opportunities for citizens to access broadband internet at local access points through expanded Hot Spots on and within public facilities.

- Goochland Branch Library
- Reynolds Community College – Goochland Campus
- Goochland County Public Schools
- Goochland County Fire Stations
- Central High Cultural and Educational Complex

Support Goochland County Public Schools existing initiative to provide students, demonstrating a financial need, with local access via Kajeet SmartSpots hot spots through a grant from the Goochland Education Foundation.

Establish educational partnerships with community stakeholders to help educate residents on the need and use of computers, smart phones, and other technology related to broadband. Will add and define specifics prior to public notification.

- Virginia Cooperative Extension – 4H Computer Education
- Goochland Parks & Recreation – future programs
- Pamunkey Regional Library – Goochland Branch - programs
- Goochland County Public Schools – robust internet safety education



Develop partnerships with the business community to promote additional hot spot sites and expand internet accessibility.

- Business community partnerships to promote initiative
- Highlight business hot spot locations
- Local partnerships for expanded service



V. Study (\$50,000 Investment)

The County will commit up to \$50,000 for necessary study and implementation plans. The study and plans will define focus areas and time frames to accomplish expansion efforts. The benefit of the study and plans will allow the County to target the focus of implementation consistent with goals set by the Governor’s Chief Broadband Advisor. It will also provide the County with improved data and maps to facilitate provider expansion and support future funding requests. In addition, it will identify where additional middle mile fiber installation would expand opportunities for greater citizen access to broadband.

VI. Open Door – Private Providers

All providers are welcome and encouraged to expand service to Goochland citizens. We support and encourage private enterprise success and given that the county is legislatively prohibited from being a provider.

VII. Foster Partnerships – Focus on Providers

Goochland will focus on fostering partnerships with providers in order to incentivize expansion of service to unserved & underserved areas of the county. Pursuit of state grant and funding opportunities require partnerships between local governments and private providers. Other federal or private funding opportunities may be more successful with similar partnerships.



VIII. Leverage Federal & State Efforts

Evaluate each federal and state grant or loan opportunity to determine if it is in the best interest of the county to pursue as a funding opportunity. It is important to leverage federal and state funding opportunities, but requirements including partnerships, maps, plans, restricted service areas may make it impossible to pursue.

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – Broadband Planning Grant – Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
- Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) – Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
- Rural eConnectivity Pilot Program (ReConnect Program) – United States Department of Agriculture

IX. Infrastructure Support – Leveraging Tower & Fiber Network (\$1.66 Million Investment)

- County is willing to consider access/lease space of County assets (towers, fiber, facilities, property and existing infrastructure), and to work with providers in a manner that is encouraging, flexible, cost effective, and values the investment of broadband providers.
- County has a staff liaison for all necessary permits and approvals for broadband infrastructure.
- County values public education and service availability and sees the value of using its public information resources and media outlets for these purposes.
- County understands that more than one third-party provider may be interested and involved in the provision and expansion of broadband services but is mindful to avoid a detrimental effect on the service through frequency conflicts.
- To the extent feasible, the County is open to assisting broadband providers with pursuing federal or state broadband funding opportunities to help offset the capital costs of broadband access and capacity.
- County, where appropriate, would serve as anchor tenants to any private partner(s)' broadband networks to provide recurring revenue source, so long as the service provided to the County is equal to or better than the current pricing and quality of service currently being provided.



X. Financial Investments (\$400,000 Investment)

1. Provide tax increment incentives to providers in-partnership with the Goochland County Economic Development Authority (EDA) to provide.
2. County in partnership with the EDA will commit up to \$200,000 for grants, matches, or as incentives to providers. The County will provide \$125,000 and \$75,000 provided by the EDA.
3. County in partnership with the EDA will offer a low interest loan incentive up to \$200,000 to incentivize service delivery. The County will provide \$125,000 and \$75,000 provided by the EDA.