

Queen Anne's Broadband Advisory Committee (BAC)

Meeting Notes

May 17, 2018

Com. Jack Wilson noted that as he canvasses the county, broadband is a top issue of interest and concern. Example: farmers who aim to collect data for precision farming.

The BAC agreed to proceed on a fast track aiming to acquire broadband services for QAC residents. Priority will be given to connecting QAC residents who are unserved or underserved first, then expanding to improve connectivity countywide.

The BAC should develop a roadmap - who gets service first? Consider viewing the task at macro level, wherein coverage can be improved over time after immediate fixes bring unserved and underserved residents into the 21st century.

The BAC will invite each of several currently interested potential vendors to complete a "survey" that specifies how they aim to provide county residents with broadband services (see below). The focus will be on residential/commercial broadband access (not government buildings and spaces).

Potential vendors:

- ABB (2 projects)
- WideOpenNetworks
- Cambio
- Delmarva Wi-Fi
- KentFOS - pocket areas, lease other people's fiber
- Alteas-Bridgemaxx

(WiFiber) may be involved after fiber is laid

Questions/criteria:

1. Do you have any existing projects that will meet the needs of unserved and underserved QAC residents/areas?
2. Are you willing to interface with (be a member of) the Maryland Broadband co-op?
3. Please view the current coverage map and confirm your ability to connect unserved and underserved residents.
4. What are your plans to short- and long-term coverage?
5. Please provide at least 4 use cases for provision of your services (telecommuting, farming, industrial, commercial)

6. What will your services cost consumers at time of usage?
7. What are your proposed ownership and maintenance expectations?

Other discussion points

- The Maryland BB coop was established in 2006 and QAC is a member. It will be advantageous for QAC and vendors to align with this current structure.
- BTOP grant - One MD BB network (central MD is in great shape, led by organized Howard County; 15 rural counties managed by DoIT, not as well covered)
- 26 miles - can't be used for residential (owned by state), but can use as trunk to create branches of fiber
- Dark fiber maintenance \$84K
- Get all providers on towers? County doesn't own towers
- Watertowers? But this is where people have ABB
- Lot of dead zones - why no towers there?
- Consider utility model (aka Easton utility)? Likely would not be effective or practical in QAC

Incentives for vendors

- 301 corridor - investment opportunity
- 156,000 farming acres
- Could a portion of the franchise fee be waived to offset costs to lure vendors?
- Consider re-thinking "service per mile" vs. "content usage per residence." There may be plusses to metered concept, offering additional flexibility to vendors' business models.

Action items:

- Reach out to vendors
- Create criteria
- Give them maps and criteria