



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA LETTER**

**Agenda Number:**

**Clerk of the Board of Supervisors**  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

**Department Name:** County Executive Office  
**Department No.:** 012  
**For Agenda Of:** August 16, 2022  
**Placement:** Administrative  
**Estimated Time:** N/A  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:** N/A  
**Vote Required:** Majority

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Department: Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer  
Director(s):  
Contact Info: Nancy Anderson, Assistant County Executive Officer

DocuSigned by:  
*Nancy Anderson*  
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**SUBJECT: Local Agency Technical Assistance (LATA) Grant Application for Broadband**

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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence:

As to form: No

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: No

**Recommended Actions:**

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- A. Approve and authorize the CEO, or designee, to sign on behalf of the County a Notarized Affidavit as part of a Local Agency Technical Assistance (LATA) grant application established by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC);
- B. Delegate authority to the County Executive Officer, or designee, to apply for a Local Agency Technical Assistance grant in the amount of \$500,000 to implement the Countywide Broadband Strategic Plan, and to sign any documents required in connection with the grant, including a Consent Form;
- C. Approve and authorize the Chair of the Board to sign a Letter of Support for the Application for LATA by the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) and the County; and
- D. Determine that the recommended actions are not the acceptance and approval of a project that is subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(4), finding that the project is a creation of government funding mechanisms or other government fiscal activities, which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment.

**Summary:**

The CPUC established the Local Agency Technical Assistance (LATA) grant program for eligible pre-construction work facilitating broadband network projects to areas in need. The program has a \$50 million budget for eligible local agencies and tribal entities in California, including a \$5 million set aside for tribes. In coordination with SBCAG on Broadband Strategic Planning efforts, the County of Santa Barbara seeks authorization to apply for a LATA grant in the amount of \$500,000 for the development of a Programmatic EIR and network high level design. As part of the application requirements, County staff recommends the Board approve and authorize the CEO, or designee, to complete the required Notarized Affidavit (Attachment A).

**Background:**

On September 21, 2021, staff brought forth a proposal for a Countywide Broadband Strategic Plan which included the County's participation in the development of a long-term strategic plan for broadband throughout the County. During the October 19, 2021 Board meeting on ARPA fund allocations, the Board approved \$200,000 to be used toward a countywide broadband strategic plan. During the [February 1, 2022 meeting](#), the Board approved a subrecipient agreement with SBCAG for the preparation of the broadband strategic plan. Work on the plan has been underway since January 2022 and is expected to be completed in November 2022. As part of the broadband strategic plan implementation, County staff recommends applying for a LATA grant from the CPUC to further broadband implementation efforts.

**Discussion:**

SBCAG and the County, with the support of each of the region's local governments, are in the process of preparing a broadband strategic plan for the region. The work is being conducted by the Broadband Consortium Pacific Coast and administered by SBCAG staff.

The final Broadband Strategic Plan will position the region to capitalize on state and federal grants to improve the region's broadband network. The plan is expected to:

1. Identify the region's current broadband assets and gaps;
2. Assess gaps as compared to the region's disadvantaged communities;
3. Provide planning-level scopes of work for projects to build out the broadband network; and
4. Consider various governance scenarios to continue the work.

The next step is to begin the implementation of the Broadband Strategic Plan. A statewide funding program is available through the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) offering Local Agency Technical Assistance (LATA) grants. These grants are available to government agencies to facilitate broadband deployment. Each applicant is eligible for up to \$500,000. (Higher amounts can be requested but will need CPUC Board approval.) All the member jurisdictions are eligible to apply for their own grant if that is needed on a local level.

Staff has been working with SBCAG and BCPC on coordination of LATA grant applications, and SBCAG plans to apply for a LATA grant for the development of a Joint Powers Authority for Broadband. The County intends to apply for a LATA grant for a Programmatic EIR and network high level design. The two projects will work hand in hand, and SBCAG will be requesting support letters from the region's local agencies to support both applications (Attachment B). If awarded funding, County staff will be partnering with SBCAG to administer and manage the development of the Programmatic EIR and network design that enables the last mile.

The purpose of the Countywide Programmatic EIR is to analyze the overall impacts and benefits from approving and permitting the construction and installation of ubiquitous high-speed Internet infrastructure throughout Santa Barbara County so that each proposed broadband project can be evaluated in the context of the net contributions to advancing the official policy of the Board. A Countywide Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is intended to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), if required, effectively and efficiently to facilitate accelerated deployment of ubiquitous broadband infrastructure in the County.

Additionally, work is underway as part of the Santa Barbara County Broadband Strategy to create a regional network concept based on the planning and participation of local governments, broadband providers, and the State of California's emerging Golden State Network (GSN). The next step of moving the concept to reality is the performance of a high-level design of areas that are gaps (projects necessary) to complete the network. The design should validate the overall concept and provide project definitions with sufficient detail to secure funding for detail design and engineering, the forecast of potential costs, and development of an operations model. In addition, identification of specific strategies for two focus areas, Los Alamos & Guadalupe, as last mile pilot is desired.

Staff recommends the County apply for a LATA to assist with the costs associated with a Programmatic EIR and high-level network design and authorize the CEO, or designee to complete the Notarized Affidavit as part of the application packet.

Additional information about LATA grants may be found at the following link:

<https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/-/media/cpuc-website/divisions/communications-division/documents/broadband-implementation-for-california/lata-grantee-manual-062822.pdf>

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

There are no fiscal impacts at this time.

**Special Instructions:**

Please return one physical copy and one electronic copy of the executed Notarized Affidavit and the Letter of Support to Jasmine McGinty at [jmcginty@countyofsb.org](mailto:jmcginty@countyofsb.org), ext. 3108.

**Attachments:**

Attachment A – Notarized Affidavit

Attachment B –Support Letter for Grant Application

**Authored by:**

Jasmine McGinty, Principal Analyst, County Executive Office