

Charles City County Telecommunications Project: Roxbury Phase

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Commonwealth of
Virginia



Department of Housing and
Community Development



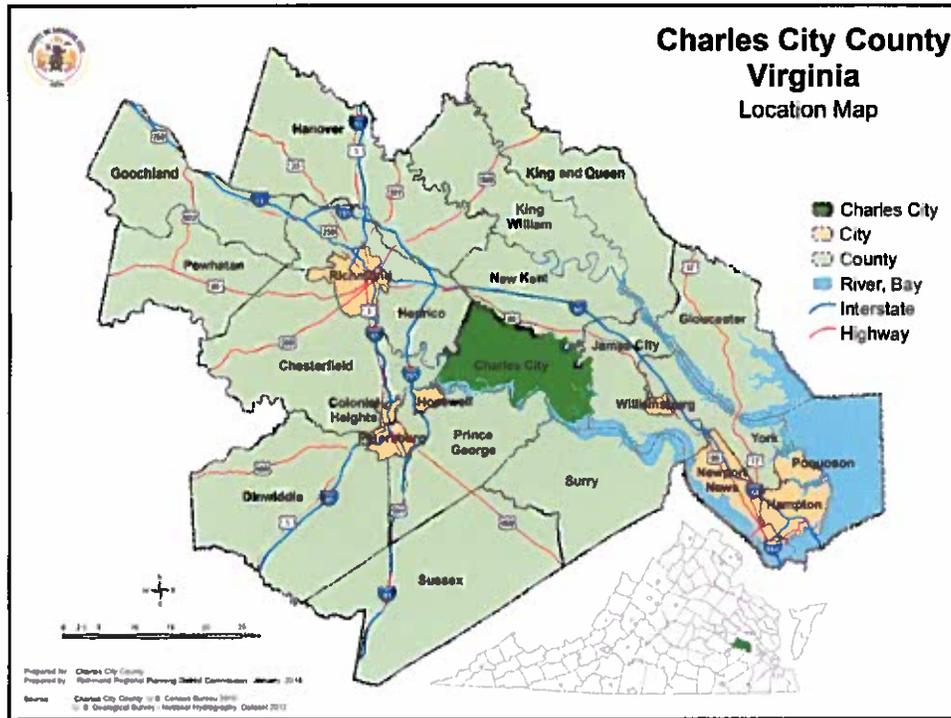
County of Charles City



Presentation Discussion Points

- Existing Conditions
- Project Overview
- Grants and Monies Involved
- Process
- Final Thoughts and Recommendations





Existing Conditions

- Lack of reliable and affordable internet in Roxbury area
- Various providers unwilling to upgrade infrastructure/service
- Industrial park contains around 50 businesses
- Roughly 650 people employed in area
- Job retention/creation of 225 positions



Existing Conditions

- 96% of residential respondents desire better internet/data service
- 65% of residential respondents desire better telephone service
- 86% of residential respondents not satisfied with current service
- 42% of residential respondent households use internet to actively complete school assignments or job training
- 71% of residential respondents on dial-up with no other offered alternative



Existing Conditions

- 95% of business respondents desire better internet/data service
- 91% of business respondents desire better telephone service
- 77% of business respondents not satisfied with current service
- 57% of business respondents indicate they are willing to pay more for better service
- 76% of business respondents use Verizon as internet provider and 95% use Verizon as local telephone provider
- 48% of business respondents state that affordable broadband could allow them to create new jobs at their establishments



Project Overview

- Location: Roxbury Area (fiber conduit and wireless); Charles City C.H. and Ruthville (wireless)
- Infrastructure: Roughly 7-8 miles of in-ground fiber conduit, equipment cabinets; 2 new 120' tall wireless towers, and colocation equipment for existing tower.
- Cost: Total Estimated Project Cost = \$655,000.00





Grants and Monies Involved

- **Telecommunications Planning Grant:**
 - VA DHCD program up to \$25,000
 - Must have Plan complete prior to being able to apply for implementation funds
 - Must form a local telecommunication management team of diverse stakeholders
 - Must identify and quantify needs through surveys/data
 - Must give a public presentation on the planning grant and Board must adopt resolution in support of grant application



Grants and Monies Involved

- **CDBG Economic Development Grant:**
 - VA DHCD program up to \$700,000
 - Must have completed Telecommunication Plan
 - Must be based upon job creation/retention
 - Economic development focused



Grants and Monies Involved

- **Charles City County Financial Project Totals:**
 - **Telecommunication Planning Grant-**
 - \$25,000 VA DHCD Grant; \$10,000 Local EDA Match
 - **CDBG Economic Development Grant-**
 - \$600,000 VA DHCD Grant; \$55,000 Local EDA Match



Process

- October 2012- Began discussing need with VA DHCD and PDC Staff; advised to apply for Telecommunication Planning Grant
- December 2012- Submitted Planning grant to VA DHCD
- February 2013- Received comments from VA DHCD stating need not justified for grant
- March – June 2013- Created in-house survey and distributed it to all churches, businesses, schools, newspapers in County; received 155 residential and 33 business completed surveys.
- July 2013- VA DHCD reviewed survey data and stated need was still not justified. County formalized telecommunication management team.



Process

- August 2013- County worked with Richmond PDC to obtain letters of support for the grant. 87 letters of support were received from businesses, community groups, retail associations, and regional entities
- October 2013- County awarded planning grant– hired DesignNine, Inc.
- January – March 2014- Second survey completed; 154 residential and 51 business respondents
- September 2014- Planning grant completed under budget and well before deadline
- October 2014- County applied for CDBG Economic Development Grant
- November 2014- County met with Roxbury area businesses to inform them of County's continued efforts
- December 2014- County notified of CDBG Economic Development Grant full award; presented by Secretary Jones on December 22, 2014





Process

- February 2015 – Retained DesignNine, Inc. to serve as project manager; created connection agreement and held first public hearing/meeting; Doug Ellis is VADHCD project manager
- March 2015 – Held second public hearing/meeting and a community broadband provider forum; County and DesignNine begin ERR process
- April 2015 – County begins submitting and collecting signed connection agreements to businesses; County receives a total of 69 signed agreements by June; project route is amended due to input from Tier 1 provider; County requests pre-contract extension to June 21, 2015
- May 2015 – County selects Eden & Associates to survey and engineer fiber route
- June 2015 – County completes ERR process; completes all pre-contract activities by June 21, 2015 (YAY!!!)



Process

- June 2015 – Tier 1 provider formally commits to making upgrades to serve the soon to-be-built County network; County identifies and works with regional provider
- July 2015 – County is formally under contract with VADHCD; County purchases fiber and tower components
- *August 2015 – County hires construction contractor; construction begins late August 2015
- *September 2015 – Towers are erected; fiber route is complete in industrial park
- *October 2015 – Construction is completed by mid-October; network is tested and in operation by the end of October

*Current anticipated schedule



Final Thoughts and Recommendations

- Internet and telecommunications no longer are a luxury and are now a utility
- Apply for the VA DHCD telecommunications planning grant ASAP
- Pick a well qualified consultant to complete your plan
- Be persistent and creative; view the project in phases
- Utilize the your PDC and regional entities for support
- Send all businesses form letters of support that they can sign and mail
- Create telecommunication management team ASAP
- Do not be discouraged by low participation in meetings or lack of provider involvement



Final Thoughts and Recommendations

- Ensure that all involved providers are on the same page regarding routes, equipment and expectations
- Once awarded CDBG funds, immediately start ERR
- Utilize your local historian to write DHR analysis letter
- Be persistent with backhaul (tier 1) providers
- Adopt a telecommunications ordinance (zoning) that supports last mile service
- Realize that large providers will offer “deals” to customers for lengthy contracts once project appears to be a reality
- Don’t promise certain speeds or capabilities
- **EVERY COMMUNITY SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE AND RELIABLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS**



Questions

