

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, FLORIDA

MEMORANDUM

TO: Indian River County Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Jason E. Brown, County Administrator

SUBJECT: Local Technology Planning Team Recommendation

DATE: October 12, 2022

BACKGROUND:

In July 2020, the Florida Office of Broadband was established within DEO's Division of Community Development to increase the availability and effectiveness of broadband Internet throughout the state. The amendment of Section 288.9961, Florida Statutes, and creation of Sections 288.9962 and 288.9963, Florida Statutes, provides DEO access to federal grant dollars and assists rural communities with the expansion of broadband services, as well as provides directives for broadband mapping and the Broadband Opportunity Program.

In May, 2021 the Indian River County Board of County Commissioners commissioned a broadband study to be conducted by Magellan-Advisors, Inc. The purpose of the study was to detail the options for improving the broadband environment based on the available infrastructure assets, resources and public policy tools.

In September 2021, the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) launched the Local Technology Planning Team initiative using the Broadband Planning Toolkit developed by the Office of Broadband. Local Technology Planning Teams are tasked with working within their communities to understand their current broadband availability, locate unserved and underserved businesses and residents, identify assets relevant to broadband deployment, build partnerships with broadband service providers, and identify opportunities to leverage assets and reduce barriers to the deployment of broadband Internet services in the community.

ANALYSIS

The broadband study conducted by Magellan-Advisors for the County followed the nine-step process outlined in the Broadband Planning Toolkit. That report has been shared with the Florida Office of Broadband. The study serves as an excellent starting point and does provide recommendations for addressing the near term needs for two underserved areas of Indian River County. However, in order to better align with the Local Technology Planning Team (LTPT) structure recommended by the Broadband Planning Toolkit and to address longer-term broadband planning for Indian River County, staff recommends designating the existing Indian River County Economic Development Council (EDC) to serve as the LTPT for Indian River County. The current Indian River County EDC membership closely aligns with LTPT representation recommendations outlined in the Broadband Planning Toolkit, which are included below for reference.

Industry Sector:	Qualifier/Purpose:	Examples:
Libraries	Education & Information Access	• County Director of Libraries
K12 Education	Public & Private	• Superintendent of Schools • School Board Member(s) • College/University Representative(s)

Health Care Providers	Telemedicine, Institutional Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Department of Health • Hospital/Clinic Representative(s)
Private Business	ECommerce; Economic Development; Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Business Owners • Chamber of Commerce
Tourism	Vacation Planning & E-Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist Development Organization • Local Attractions
Community Organizations	Outreach Initiatives; Community Presence/Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonprofits • Community Leaders
Agriculture	Base Industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers and CoOps • Equipment Brokers • Local IFAS Official
Economic Development Organizations	(E-) Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development Council/Committee Member(s)
Local Governments	E-Governance; E-Government; Infrastructure Initiatives; County Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Administrator • Town/City Representatives • Parks and Recreation • Public Safety & Emergency Services
Parks and Recreation	Infrastructure and Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National/State Park
Local Broadband & Internet Service Providers	Partnerships; Infrastructure Expansion (Last Mile); Funding Representative(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet Service Providers servicing county/region

FUNDING

There is no funding required to designate the Indian River County EDC to also serve as the LTPT. However, it is anticipated that the LPTP would have significant advisory input into any potential broadband grant pursuits.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Board designate the duties and responsibilities of the Local Technology Planning Team, as outlined in the FL DEO Broadband Planning Toolkit, to the Indian River County Economic Development Council.

ATTACHMENTS

Broadband-planning-toolkit_final.pdf

DISTRIBUTION

Dylan Reingold – County Attorney
Phil Matson – Director, Community Development
Indian River County Economic Development Council