



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 17-0442, **Version:** 1

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Chief Administrative Office recommending the Board:

- 1) Award Request for Proposals (RFP) 17-918-031 to the successful proposer, NeoConnect, to provide a Broadband Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study for El Dorado County;
- 2) Authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, or designee, to negotiate an agreement for services with NeoConnect, with a maximum obligation not to exceed \$150,000, to perform a Broadband needs assessment and feasibility study;
- 3) Authorize the Purchasing Agent to execute said Agreement for Services, contingent upon approval by County Counsel and Risk Management; and
- 4) Authorize the Purchasing Agent, or designee, to execute any contract amendments which do not increase the total amount or term of the Agreement, and contingent upon approval by County Counsel and Risk Management.

**FUNDING:** Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) Grant (50%) and General Fund (50%).

### **DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION**

Chief Administrative Office recommending the Board:

- 1) Award Request for Proposals (RFP) No. 17-918-031 to the successful proposer, NeoConnect, to provide a Broadband Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study for El Dorado County;
- 2) Authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, or designee, to negotiate an agreement for services with NeoConnect, with a maximum obligation not to exceed \$150,000, to perform a Broadband needs assessment and feasibility study;
- 3) Authorize the Purchasing Agent to execute said Agreement for Services, contingent upon approval by County Counsel and Risk Management; and
- 4) Authorize the Purchasing Agent, or designee, to execute any contract amendments which do not increase the total amount or term of the Agreement, and contingent upon approval by County Counsel and Risk Management.

### **DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND**

Independent analysis of the current Broadband deployment in the County indicates that its best broadband capacity is slightly less than average grade in terms of speed (download and upload) and access to service providers, with a majority of the County being either substantially underserved or unserved in Broadband service. The lack of Broadband hinders the County's efforts to attract new businesses, create jobs, and educate and retain its residents.

On September 1, 2015, the Board held a workshop session on the state of Broadband infrastructure in El Dorado County (Agenda Item 27, Legislative File 15-1020). The workshop was in preparation for an application to the United States Economic Development Administration (EDA) for Program funds to complete a feasibility study for the County for the improvement of Broadband infrastructure in order to enhance public and private investments in technology infrastructure, and strengthen El Dorado County's economic competitiveness. The Local Technical Assistance program is a funding opportunity under the EDA that serves to strengthen the capacity of local or State organizations,

institutions of higher education, and other eligible recipients to undertake and promote effective economic development programs through projects such as feasibility analyses and impact studies.

On January 12, 2016, the Board adopted Resolution 013-2016 (Agenda item 5, Legislative File 16-0006) approving the submittal of the application for the grant, certifying that the County has budgeted \$75,000 for the purposes of providing matching funds for a potential EDA Planning Program and Local Technical Assistance Program Grant, and designating the County's Economic Development Manager as the contact for the grant application.

Following submittal of the grant application, the County was awarded the Local Technical Assistance grant. On September 27, 2016, the Board accepted the \$75,000 grant award.

On January 3, 2017, the Procurement and Contracts Division of the Chief Administrative Office (CAO) released a Request for Proposals, No. 17-918-031, soliciting responses for a Broadband needs assessment and feasibility study, utilizing the EDA funding and County match. The scope of the project was to include the City of Placerville, the City of South Lake Tahoe and unserved or underserved areas throughout the County. The purpose of the feasibility study is to:

1. Analyze the state of existing Broadband infrastructure in the County;
2. Provide an "action plan" for the improvement of Broadband in the County by identifying relevant projects that can be accomplished efficiently as a way to incentivize private Broadband development; recommend policy improvements to facilitate Broadband deployment; and
3. Identify applicable funding sources that could be utilized for a plan lasting 5-10 years.

Ten responses were received which met the requirements of the RFP. Following the closure of the RFP on February 22, 2017, all proposals were reviewed by a panel of six evaluators. The evaluation team consisted of one (1) County supervisor, two (2) County staff members, and three (3) community members having an interest in both the expansion of broadband infrastructure and economic development within the County. Two members of the Chief Administrative Office served in an advisory role with regard to the RFP process. All proposers were evaluated and rated with regard to demonstrated understanding of the project goals, project approach and perceived effectiveness, recent experience with projects of similar size and scope, personnel assigned to the project, and their experience with similar projects and cost.

Four proposers were identified as finalists, based upon the evaluators' scoring of the above criteria: NeoConnect, Magellan Advisors, Tilson Technology and Fiber Community. As required in the RFP, the four finalists were invited to participate in an interview with the evaluation team. Following the interviews the evaluators ranked the four proposers according to the RFP evaluation criteria as well as the interview. The evaluation team came to a consensus decision that NeoConnect was the highest ranked and most qualified proposer to effectively conduct this project. If the Board approves staff's recommendation, NeoConnect will be officially selected to move forward with the project, and staff will negotiate the agreement with NeoConnect.

The County has convened a Technical Advisory Group to provide oversight and advice on this project, and to work with the consultant on all key project tasks. This group is the same as the RFP evaluation team.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

The Board could decline to award RFP No. 17-918-031 to NeoConnect, and the Broadband Needs

Assessment and Feasibility Study would not be provided as a result of this RFP process.

**OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT**

Procurement and Contracts, Information Technologies Department, Community Development Agency, Long Range Planning Division.

**CAO RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board approve this item.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

The County has received a grant from the Economic Development Administration for \$75,000, with a required 50% County match. The total appropriation for this project is \$150,000 and is budgeted in FY 2016-17, and will be budgeted in FY 2017-18 should the project continue into next fiscal year.

**CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS**

Clerk of the Board to provide a copy of the approved minute order to Shawne Corley, Assistant CAO.

**STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT**

Infrastructure

**CONTACT**

Shawne Corley, Assistant CAO  
Mollie Purcell, Principal Administrative Analyst