



Legislation Text

File #: 18-1190, **Version:** 1

Chief Administrative Office recommending the Board approve and authorize the Purchasing Agent, or designee, to execute Amendment 2 to contract 248 with NEO Fiber, Inc., doing business as NeoConnect, to extend the contract term to December 31, 2018, with no change in the contract amount, for the Broadband Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study for El Dorado County.

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

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND

The contract with NeoConnect for the provision of a Broadband Feasibility Study was executed on September 20, 2017 with a one year term. The consultant is continuing their research and Broadband Ad Hoc Committee meetings have been scheduled throughout August 2018, with the expectation that NeoConnect will provide a presentation to the Board along with their final findings and recommendation in mid-September 2018. An extension of the contract term to December 31, 2018 will allow for completion of final work within the current scope of the contract as well as financial close out and completion of reporting/reimbursement requirements to the EDA. Available funding from the EDA has already been extended to December 31, 2018.

Project Background

On September 1, 2015, following a presentation on the state of Broadband infrastructure in the County, the Board established a Broadband Technical Advisory Committee to work on broadband issues and appointed two Board members to that Ad Hoc Committee (Legistar 15-1020).

On January 12, 2016, the Board adopted Resolution 013-2016, approving the submittal of an application for an Economic Development Agency (EDA) Planning Program and Local Technical Assistance Program Grant for the purposes of completing a Broadband feasibility study (Legistar 16-0006, version 1).

On September 27, 2016 the Board authorized acceptance of a \$75,000 grant award from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) Planning Program and Local Technical Assistance Program for the purpose of conducting a Broadband feasibility study in El Dorado County, and committed \$75,000 for the purpose of the 50% County match required by the grant. The resolution states that improved Broadband service fits strongly within the County's Economic Development Strategic Plan and that building Broadband capacity in El Dorado County is "a way to create and retain jobs, educate and retain students, and position the County in the 21st century economy" (Legistar 16-0006, version 2).

A technical advisory group was assembled to assist with technical expertise in the area of Broadband policy and infrastructure. This group includes members from non-profit organizations with special interests in Broadband technology and stakeholder community members.

A Request for Proposal (RFP) for a Broadband Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study was

released and subsequently awarded on April 25, 2017 to NeoConnect, a Colorado-based consulting firm specializing in Broadband planning and analysis (Legistar 17-0442). A subgroup of the technical advisory group and the Ad Hoc Committee participated in the RFP evaluation process. A contract was negotiated and executed with NeoConnect, with an effective date in late September of 2017.

Since September of 2017, NeoConnect has initiated regular bi-weekly meetings with members of the Ad Hoc Committee and technology advisory group to discuss the status of Broadband in the community on both the east and west slopes.

During the week of January 16th-19th NeoConnect conducted several stakeholder community groups as part of the outreach component of the Feasibility Study project. These groups included El Dorado County residents and professionals from various community stakeholder groups including education and libraries, public safety, healthcare, and business.

On January 23, 2018, NeoConnect presented to the Board of Supervisors a summary of their efforts so far, including the current broadband environment and infrastructure in El Dorado County, and results of surveys and community engagement. Their presentation also included examples of policies and ordinances that facilitate broadband deployment, such as “dig once” or “shadow conduit” policies that allow for the installation of fiber conduit when a trench is open for streets, developments, and other construction projects (Legistar 18-0077).

On June 26, 2018, NeoConnect presented to the Board of Supervisors an update of further progress on the Feasibility Study project, including a discussion of various strategies and levels of County investment to improve Broadband in the County, along with a companion Broadband Roadmap report (Legistar 18-0950).

It is estimated that Neoconnect will make a final presentation to the Board in mid to late September with their final findings and analysis.

ALTERNATIVES

N/A

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

N/A

FINANCIAL IMPACT

A \$150,000 budget (\$75,000 EDA grant, \$75,000 General Fund/Economic Development budget) has been established for the Broadband Feasibility Study effort, with \$126,000 of that budget dedicated to the contract with Neoconnect.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

N/A

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT

Economic Development-Infrastructure to improve and maintain competitiveness

Good Governance-Infrastructure

CONTACT

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