

BOARD OF TRUSTEES INFORMATION



Meeting Date:	August 22, 2023
Agenda Title/Subject:	Broadband Feasibility Analysis Update
Type of Item:	<input type="text"/>
Purpose:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update the Board on the RFP process and propose a P3 option.
Presented by:	Walt Elish

ATTACHMENTS:

- Broadband Presentation

BACKGROUND:

After the presentation of Larimer County and Loveland Pulse at the May 9, 2023, Board Meeting, the Trustees directed staff to develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit responses from interested parties to develop a fiber network throughout the Town. While staff was developing the RFP, we became aware of another option to fund and operate fiber infrastructure throughout the Town. We were not aware of this option prior to now since this is relatively new in the Broadband industry but gaining momentum as more and more communities look to have fiber deployed throughout their communities but may not be able to finance the significant upfront costs that would be required. This option is commonly known as Public-Private Partnership (P3). Although the P3 option is relatively new to the Broadband industry it has and is being used throughout the country by governments to fund other types of infrastructure projects like roads and airports for example.

After learning more about the P3 option, staff felt it was our responsibility to bring this option to the Board for consideration since we believe it is a viable opportunity to deploy quality fiber infrastructure throughout the Town, while still having some control in the installation and operation, at a fraction of the cost of other models. By having quality fiber installed throughout the Town, any Broadband company, including Hilltop Broadband, Loveland Pulse, Lumen, Allo or anyone else, would have the opportunity to serve Berthoud residents and businesses on an open access fiber network.

FISCAL IMPACT AND FUND SOURCE:

A fiscal impact analysis has not been completed at this time. However, based on preliminary estimates completed previously and most recently with Loveland Pulse, it is estimated that the cost to deploy broadband throughout the Town is about \$19 million. The P3 option would most likely require a significant less investment by the Town. The exact amount would be negotiated with the selected company through the RFQ process.

COMMUNITY TOUCHSTONES:

The project has the potential to impact Berthoud's overall quality of life and place since most everyone relies on high-speed quality internet service. Whether a person has a home-based business, working out of their home, taking online courses or using the internet for personal entertainment or needs, having reliable and affordable internet service is paramount in maintaining Berthoud's attractiveness as a desirable location to live and work. Also, with the Town's involvement, efforts would be made to facilitate the availability of an affordable product for Berthoud's low-income residents.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Authorize staff to issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to solicit information from interested partners, to install and operate a quality fiber network throughout the Town, about their (1) ability and qualifications to meet the Town's objectives, (2) ability to finance, (3) past and proven experience, and (4) preferred partnership model.