

Caroline County's Plan For Universal Coverage

as developed and approved by

The Caroline Broadband Advisory Committee

In August of 2020 The Caroline Broadband Advisory Committee Adopted the Strategic plan which outlined the guidelines that it would use to guide future discussions involving broadband. It was decided in this plan that we would prioritize solutions that were in current use to deliver broadband to rural areas. The committee considered multiple solutions. The committee then Ranked solutions based on their ability to deliver internet to houses in rural areas with challenging topography and thick vegetation such as the unserved areas in Caroline County. The committee researched solutions and provided the following list to drive future conversation based on years of engineering construction, maintenance, and ISP experience.

1st Fiber to the Home

2nd Hybrid Fiber Coax/Coax

3rd Fixed Wireless

4th Satellite

5th Existing wireless/ hotspots.

In discussing all options, it was acknowledged that a short-term solution may be needed until the best and final solutions can be delivered. It was also discussed that due the scalability of Coax that it can deliver near fiber speeds however the speeds were not symmetrical.

In August 2021, based on the strategic plan, The Committee formulated a roadmap, the Plan for Universal Coverage to deliver an Internet connection to all homes in Caroline County. The Committee acknowledged that the successful VATI 2021 project should be part of multiyear project to deliver internet availability to each and every home.

By building on the Year 2021 project, and following our strategic plan of expanding existing footprints of Cable providers, we can avoid the cost of mid-mile construction and deliver a solution that is saleable and will not need to be replaced with a different solution in the near future. Expansion beyond 2021 was approved by the Committee to presented to the Board of Supervisors. The plan involves two providers, Comcast and Atlantic Broadband. Since we have form Private/Public partnerships with both companies, a tiered approach will need to be used to attain universal Coverage.

Caroline County has been working for over 4 years to encourage Comcast to expand their footprint in the western portion of Caroline County to reach unserved houses that are surrounded by Comcast service areas. Jericho Road, and Anderson Mill Road identified and approved by the Board of Supervisors as the 2022 VATI project. During the second VATI cycle Caroline should work to develop a partnership with Comcast to complete coverage of remaining unserved addresses identified in the attached map as areas West of 95. The Attached map titled Caroline County/Comcast Project Areas.

Due the expansion of VATI funding for 2022 and the willingness of Atlantic Broadband to partner with Caroline County the Broadband Advisory committee decided to Prioritize the Dawn Area, then followed by Woodford and Corbin. This left only a large area in Sparta/Central point to be covered and it had already been targeted for RDOF funding. This area would be covered in 6 years. In discussions with ABB they could actually cover the RDOF during year three of the funding cycle. This will complete coverage of all areas East of 95. The Eastern Area Plan for universal Coverage is defined in the attached Caroline County /ABB FY2022 Project Areas map.

The Caroline Broadband advisory committee recommends that we work to expand coverage as described to attain an available internet connection to all Unserved rooftops in Caroline County.

Jason Barlow

Chairman, Caroline Broadband Advisory Committee