



# COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION  
DRIVE, ROOM 102A  
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

## SUMMARY REPORT

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**Agenda Date:** 12/12/2023

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**To:** Board of Supervisors

**Department or Agency Name(s):** Economic Development Board

**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Bradley Johnson, 565-6456

**Vote Requirement:** Majority

**Supervisorial District(s):** Countywide

**Title:**

North Bay North Coast Broadband Consortium Memorandum of Understanding and Letter of Support for Federal Last Mile Funding Account Applications

**Recommended Action:**

- A) Approve an updated Memorandum of Understanding between the County of Sonoma, County of Marin, County of Mendocino, and County of Napa for their participation in the North Bay North Coast Broadband Consortium (NBNCBC) for the term of January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2027; and
- B) Authorize chair to sign a letter of support on behalf of the Board of Supervisors to the California Public Utilities Commission for Golden State Connect Authority's applications for Federal Last Mile Funding Account

**Executive Summary:**

In June 2019, the Board of Supervisors approved the North Bay North Coast Broadband Consortium (NBNCBC) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), for the period of June 30, 2019 through December 31, 2023. Staff are recommending continued participation in the NBNCBC and are asking the Board to approve the updated MOU between the County of Sonoma, County of Marin, County of Mendocino, and County of Napa for continued participation in the consortium for the period of January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2027.

A key priority for the consortium is to support member agencies' pursuit of state and federal funding opportunities to expand broadband infrastructure. According to direction provided by the Board of Supervisors on August 1, 2023, Golden State Connect Authority (GSCA), on behalf of the County, applied for last mile infrastructure funding through the California Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) Federal Funding Account for the following project areas: East Cloverdale/Preston, East Santa Rosa, Jenner, and Walsh Landing. Pursuant to recent NBNCBC Advisory Board direction, member agencies have been encouraged to draft letters of support for Federal Funding Account applications. Today's item requests authority for the Chair to sign such a letter of support for Golden State Connect Authority's applications in Sonoma County on behalf of the Board of Supervisors. □

**Discussion:**

Access to fast, affordable, and reliable broadband is important in today's economy and society. Unfortunately, some rural and urban communities still lack access to broadband due to the high costs of infrastructure deployment, affordability of services, digital literacy, technology access, and other factors. Developing new, reliable broadband infrastructure and services in unserved and underserved areas of the county and providing

residents with affordable and equitable access to existing services, are important public goals, both for the County and for the North Bay region.

The North Bay North Coast Broadband Consortium (NBNCBC) consisting of Marin, Napa, Mendocino, and Sonoma counties, was formed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2014 to oversee and manage broadband planning activities in the four-county region. The term of the current MOU, approved by amendment on June 11, 2019, expires December 31, 2023. The MOU will allow for, among other things, continued use of approved funding from the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) and California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) to implement the 2023-2025 NBNCBC CASF grant work plan and digital equity planning, respectively.

NBNCBC's past accomplishments include facilitating wireline speed testing of existing internet service in priority areas, establishing a Strategic Broadband Plan for Sonoma County in 2021 ([https://sonomaedb.org/Microsites/Economic%20Development%20Board/Documents/Broadband/06\\_08\\_21\\_EDB\\_Access%20Sonoma%20Plan\\_ENGLISH%20ADA.pdf](https://sonomaedb.org/Microsites/Economic%20Development%20Board/Documents/Broadband/06_08_21_EDB_Access%20Sonoma%20Plan_ENGLISH%20ADA.pdf)), assisting with CASF infrastructure grant proposals and a feasibility study for new middle mile segments, and hosting in person and virtual outreach events for adoption programs, including an event on April 28, 2023 for residents, businesses, public agencies, and policymakers, which was attended by approximately 200 people.

The MOU authorizes continuation of the NBNCBC Oversight Committee, which is comprised of a member of the Board of Supervisors from each county. The MOU does not authorize the Oversight Committee to make policy. However, the Oversight Committee can make recommendations for policy and bring those recommended policies to their respective boards for approval. The Oversight Committee meets quarterly to monitor progress with the grant work plan, interface with NBNCBC-participating boards of supervisors and facilitate common issues affecting all member counties. Board members that are currently active in member county broadband efforts include Marin County Supervisor Dennis Rodoni, Napa County Supervisor Anne Cottrell, Mendocino County Supervisor Ted Williams and Sonoma County Supervisor Chris Coursey. Alternate members include Marin County Supervisor Mary Sackett, Mendocino County Supervisor Maureen Mulheren, Napa County Supervisor Ryan Gregory, and Sonoma County Supervisor Lynda Hopkins.

Sonoma County will continue to be the fiscal agent for the Consortium's CASF and CETF grants. As fiscal agent, the MOU authorizes administration of the CASF and CETF grant funds. If expenditures comply with the grant restrictions and state and local laws, the MOU provides for grant-related expenses to be reimbursed to NBNCBC members in accordance with corresponding grant procedures. Each county bears the responsibility for ensuring their use of funds complies with the grant restrictions and state and local laws.

Differing from prior MOUs for the NBNCBC, the proposed MOU more clearly defines the composition, role, and responsibilities of the NBNCBC Management Team. The Management Team shall be comprised of officials and staff from each of the participating counties, will provide reports to the Oversight Committee, and perform duties as needed in furtherance of the MOU and as directed by the Oversight Committee.

### **Letter of Support**

In late Spring 2023, EDB staff analyzed the high-level designs produced by Golden State Connect Authority's (GSCA) contracted engineers, Tilson Technology Management, Inc. and presented 23 proposed priority project areas to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors on August 1, 2023 (

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<https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6300680&GUID=E48B6D69-DA07-4DFF-9B7F-E8F3E99F4FE8&Options=&Search=>>). The 23 project areas were prioritized based on: 1) median household income of project area, as a proxy for disadvantaged communities; 2) connection to the statewide middle mile infrastructure; and 3) estimated subsidy need per unserved household. Based on the criteria, the Board of Supervisors selected the following priority areas:

- Jenner - 4.87 miles
- East Santa Rosa - 24.96 miles
- Walsh Landing - 12.18 miles
- East Cloverdale / Preston - 44.42 miles
- West Cloverdale - 41.75 miles
- Mark West / Shiloh - 49.24 miles
- Annapolis - 36.18 miles

Following direction provided by the Board, the GSCA applied for approximately \$19 million of last mile infrastructure funding through the CPUC's Federal Funding Account program for the following project areas: East Cloverdale/Preston, East Santa Rosa, Jenner, and Walsh Landing. Today's item is requesting authority for the Chair to sign the attached letter of support for GSCA's applications in Sonoma County to the CPUC on behalf of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors.

**Strategic Plan:**

This item directly supports the County's Five-year Strategic Plan and is aligned with the following pillar, goal, and objective.

**Pillar:** Resilient Infrastructure

**Goal:** Goal 4: Implement countywide technological solutions to promote resiliency and expand community access.

**Objective:** Objective 2: Leverage existing fiber optic infrastructure and grant opportunities to expand wireless and broadband access across County.

**Racial Equity:**

**Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?**

No

**Prior Board Actions:**

August 1, 2023 - Sonoma County Broadband Infrastructure - Implementation Options

May 9, 2023 - Broadband Program Update

April 18, 2023 - California Emerging Technology Fund Regional Broadband Consortium Leadership Grant

March 7, 2023 - California Public Utilities Commission Grant for Broadband

June 11, 2019 - Amendment to the North Bay North Coast Broadband Consortium Joint Powers Agreement and Authorization to Apply for Three Year California Public Utilities Commission Advanced Services Fund Project Plan Grant (Project Plan Grant)

December 13, 2016 - North Bay North Coast Broadband Consortium Grant and Memorandum of Understanding

July 29, 2014 - North Bay North Coast Broadband Consortium Grant and Memorandum of Understanding

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY23-24 Adopted</b>	<b>FY24-25 Projected</b>	<b>FY25-26 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
<b>Total Expenditures</b>			
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>			

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

There are no anticipated fiscal impacts related directly to this MOU. However, there are EDB staff costs associated with participation in the NCNBBC and management of ongoing broadband implementation efforts. There are 2.0 FTEs that are primarily assigned to broadband work; a permanent Department Analyst and time-limited Administrative Aid. There is also 1.0 FTE permanent Department Analyst that serves as the fiscal agent for the consortium. Both Department Analysts are funded through EDB’s Community Investment Fund allocation. The time-limited administrative aide was approved by the Board in May 2023, and is funded by a combination of ARPA and CETF grant funding. All staffing costs were included in the FY 2023-24 Adopted Budget.

<b>Staffing Impacts:</b>			
<b>Position Title (Payroll Classification)</b>	<b>Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)</b>	<b>Additions (Number)</b>	<b>Deletions (Number)</b>

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

N/A

**Attachments:**

Memorandum of Understanding with North Bay North County Broadband Consortium  
Letter of Support

**Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:**

N/A