



City of Gainesville

Lauren Poe, Mayor



May 24, 2019

Chair Charles S. Chestnut IV
Board of County Commissioners
12 SE 1st Street
Gainesville, FL 32601

On September 20, 2018 the Gainesville City Commission directed Staff to work with a consultant to complete a Community Broadband Study to explore broadband availability, affordability, performance and development opportunities in our community. Subsequently, the Alachua Board of County Commissioners allocated funding to support the study and the further analysis of potential expansion of broadband in Alachua County. On behalf of the City of Gainesville we sincerely thank you for your investment in supporting this important initiative for our community.

Our current feasibility study analyzed the most important aspects needed to consider creating a retail fiber business including market research to define interest in broadband, engineering estimates of the cost of building a fiber network, business plan projections to understand the financial feasibility of a fiber business, analysis of the legal hurdles for municipal broadband in Florida, and an analysis of numerous ancillary issues that will need to be part of the decision process to consider an expansion of our fiber network.

The Gainesville City Commission plans to hear a presentation on the results of the draft study from the consultant at the June 20, 2019 Gainesville City Commission meeting at a time certain for 3:00 PM. Along with the results we will also discuss the potential next step efforts for expanding affordable internet in our community should the Commission decide to move forward with our efforts in this regard. On behalf of the Commission, I am extending an invitation to welcome members of the Alachua County BOCC to hear the results of the Community Broadband Study and how we may be able to impact the affordability and performance of broadband service in our shared community.

Potential immediate next steps and questions to be answered are where to consider building, how may we finance a network expansion, what specific pricing and market conditions would provide the best chance for success, and how Florida laws can impact our desire to have higher service levels, affordable rates and

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more opportunity and equity for our constituents. Analyzing and answering these key questions will require further resources and could lead to critical investment in public education, more in-depth engineering estimates, and planning and budgeting for operational readiness to ensure we can implement world class community broadband service.

Thank you for your continued cooperation.

Sincerely,



Lauren Poe
Mayor

LP:blb

Cc: City Commission
Ed Bielarski, GRU General Manager
Lisa Bennett, Senior Assistant City Attorney
Michele L. Lieberman, County Manager
Sylvia Torres, County Attorney