City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

Department Source: City Utilities - Water and Light
To: City Council
From: City Manager & Staff
Council Meeting Date: April 18, 2016
Re: Broadband Update

Executive Summary

In 2013, The City of Columbia, University of Missouri and Regional Economic Development Incorporated (REDI) commissioned a needs assessment to determine the community's broadband needs, now and in the future. Magellan Advisors was the consultant chosen to perform a Broadband Needs Assessment & Planning Study. The study focused on the availability, cost and reliability of high-speed internet in the health, education and business sectors. In 2015 and again this year there are multiple Missouri Senate and House bills aimed at prohibiting/limiting municipalities from offering broadband internet service. By fall 2015 several of the local internet service providers were advertising they now had gigabit speeds available in the City of Columbia. In December of 2015 the City of Columbia contracted with Magellan Advisors to update their 2014 report, which was based on data collected in 2013. This update is expected by summer 2016.

Discussion

The 2013 commissioned Broadband Planning Study was to understand options for improving current and future broadband services within the community. With the ability to leverage Water & Light's fiber-optic network, a Broadband Needs Assessment & Planning Study examined potential opportunities for the City to expand use of this network to foster next-generation broadband services for the residents, businesses and community anchor institutions.

Magellan determined that the City may want to consider expanding its current fiber-optic network to broaden the service offerings provided throughout the community. The current network is an asset that can be enhanced with additional funding commitments and further build out. This may allow the network to accommodate additional services to residents, businesses, and community anchors.

Magellan recommended that the City investigate implementing public policy tools and developing a broadband business plan. Public policy such as Joint-Trenching agreements and Dig-once policies were recommended. The development of a comprehensive broadband business plan would lay out the business, market, technical, and operational strategies for the City to use in further development of its network. The business plan would determine total costs for construction, operation, and management of the network.

In 2015 several bills were proposed to prohibit or limit municipalities from offering broadband internet service. Senate Bill 266 would have prohibited municipalities from providing certain services already being provided within the boundaries of the municipality without a vote of

the people. House Bill 437 specified when it would be permissible for a city, town, or village to offer competitive services. Neither of these bills was enacted into law in 2015. Again in 2016 there are two bills aimed at prohibiting/limiting municipalities from offering broadband internet service. House Bill 2078 and Senate Bill 946 either specify when it is permissible for a city, town, or village to offer certain services or modify the authority of municipalities to offer certain communications services.

By fall 2015 numerous incumbent providers announced they now had infrastructure to deploy fiber based gigabit services to areas of Columbia. In December of 2015 the City of Columbia contracted with Magellan Advisors to update their 2014 report, which was based on data collected in 2013. To update their report, Magellan will complete a current broadband market analysis and a field verification survey.

Magellan's market analysis will determine the services that are available, providers, service level, pricing, and access. They will work to document all privately owned networks in Columbia and to build a comprehensive broadband map in ESRI GIS format to illustrate how Columbia is served by broadband and through which providers. Magellan proposes to meet with each identified provider to document the infrastructure changes that have occurred since the previous sets of meetings. This analysis will document fiber infrastructure, facilities, data centers, and related infrastructure in Columbia to determine how the community is being served today.

Magellan will also conduct field verification in Columbia to determine the extent of the providers' ability to deliver fiber based gigabit services. Their team will identify areas that have been deemed to include fiber distribution technologies, as well as the general fiber service areas identified by providers. Structures such as equipment and splice cabinets, as well as specific fiber routes and supporting infrastructure assets will be captured where relevant.

Magellan's update is expected by summer 2016

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: None
Long-Term Impact: None

Vision & Strategic Plan Impact

Vision Impacts:
Primary Impact: Primary, Secondary Impact: Secondary, Tertiary Impact: Tertiary

Strategic Plan Impacts:
Primary Impact: Primary, Secondary Impact: Secondary, Tertiary Impact: Tertiary

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:
Primary Impact: Primary, Secondary Impact: Secondary, Tertiary Impact: Tertiary

Legislative History

Date	Action
N/A	N/A

Suggested Council Action

None