



**Agenda Item Number
4 b.
Regional Broadband Strategy Update**

Date: September 28, 2023

Presenter: Michael Wisth, LCOG Government Services Division
Director

Subject: Regional Broadband Strategy Update

Action Recommended: None. Information Only.

Background:

In December of 2020, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriation Act (CRRSAA) was passed and includes approximately \$124 million for Oregon through ODOT. One of the provisions within the authorization allowed the funds to be used for reimbursement of revenue loss due to the COVID-19 Pandemic (Pandemic). These funds will not require local match but must be federally obligated by 2024.

While these funds can be used for transportation projects, for its share of the CRRSAA funds, ODOT adopted a methodology so the funds could be used by Oregon Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) for other purposes if the MPO so chose. The CLMPO jurisdictions agreed to an allocation which provided LCOG with \$838,000 to develop and implement a Regional Broadband Strategy and provide match for initial projects.

In June 2022, LCOG issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking the services of a consultant/firm to create a Regional Broadband Strategy (Strategy) and to facilitate a near-term funding response and strategy. The initial focus was to connect near-term project concepts, and other actionable steps towards providing enhanced and reliable Broadband

Internet Service to Lane County areas lacking appropriate coverage, to immediate and near-term Federal funding opportunities. Focus would then turn to broader longer-term support structures contributing to the ability of rural and urban centers to increase speeds and equitable access.

LCOG selected CobbFendley, a national firm specializing in regional infrastructure, to develop a funding strategy and broadband development a service strategy for Lane County.

Our presentation will discuss the progress of the project and strategies for moving forward, particularly related to focusing funding opportunities toward un- and underserved areas of Lane County, as demonstrated by our work to date.