

Agenda Item IV. UPDATE FROM COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE FOCUSED ON IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT IN UNSERVED AREAS, REGARDING INITIAL STEPS, AND COUNCIL REVIEW, DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION AND/OR POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING SAME

Greg Pittman provided an update on the progress of the subcommittee focused on identifying barriers of commercial and residential broadband in underserved areas and indicated they discussed what the obstacles are in terms of broadband deployment. Mr. Pittman and his subcommittee plan to meet with local officials on some of the challenges they are facing.

Agenda Item V. UPDATE FROM COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE FOCUSED ON STUDYING TECHNOLOGY-NEUTRAL SOLUTIONS TO OVERCOME BARRIERS TO RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT IN UNSERVED AREAS, REGARDING INITIAL STEPS, AND COUNCIL REVIEW, DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION AND/OR POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING SAME

In the absence of Dr. Patel, the subcommittee chair, other members of the subcommittee updated the council on their progress as they plan to outline and define their goals. Members of the subcommittee mentioned their desire to meet with other subcommittees.

Chairman Sproull highlighted that as to inter-subcommittee collaboration, open meetings standards should continue to be followed as a best practice.

Agenda Item VI. UPDATE FROM COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE FOCUSED ON ANALYZING HOW STATEWIDE ACCESS TO BROADBAND WOULD BENEFIT: (A) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT; (B) THE DELIVERY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND PUBLIC EDUCATION; (C) STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT; (D) STATE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS; AND (E) THE DELIVERY OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES, INCLUDING TELEMEDICINE AND TELEHEALTH, REGARDING INITIAL STEPS, AND COUNCIL REVIEW, DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION AND/OR POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING SAME

Judge Marty Lucke updated the council on a plan to reach out to leaders across the state to gather input on how broadband access would benefit communities. Judge Lucke believes that more exciting opportunities will present themselves with more broadband access.

Agenda Item VII. COMMENTS BY T-MOBILE STAFF PROVIDING INFORMATION RELATING TO COUNCIL'S AREAS OF RESEARCH, IDENTIFICATION, STUDY, AND ANALYSIS UNDER TEX. GOV'T CODE § 490H.006, INCLUDING INFORMATION RELATING TO DISTRIBUTION OF BROADBAND IN UNSERVED AREAS OF TEXAS, AND COUNCIL REVIEW, DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION AND/OR POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING SAME

T-Mobile representatives David Bazant, Head of the T-Mobile Division for Government, and Keith Ayton, a member of the T-Mobile engineering team, discussed T-Mobile's commitment to mobile broadband and emphasis on its 5G capabilities. The representatives gave examples of previous state partnerships, such as its partnership with the New York Department of Education.

T-Mobile explained one of its initiatives called "Project 10 Million," in which it plans to connect disadvantaged homes to the internet by providing them with the hardware to do so.

T-Mobile outlined its capabilities for long distance wireless service, and emphasized the magnitude of their footprint and dedication to expanding statewide broadband access.

Agenda Item VIII. COMMENTS BY MICROSOFT STAFF PROVIDING INFORMATION RELATING TO COUNCIL'S AREAS OF RESEARCH, IDENTIFICATION, STUDY, AND ANALYSIS UNDER TEX. GOV'T CODE § 490H.006, INCLUDING INFORMATION RELATING TO DISTRIBUTION OF BROADBAND IN UNSERVED AREAS OF TEXAS, AND COUNCIL REVIEW, DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION AND/OR POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING SAME

Mylie Martinez, Project Manager on the Microsoft Airband Team brought to light that at least 18 million people in the United States lack broadband connection, with 14 million of those being from rural areas.

Ms. Martinez explained into some of the technologies and programs Microsoft utilizes to make connectivity more accessible and to drive cost down. Microsoft offered to be an informational resource for Texas.

Agenda Item IX. PRACTICES OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION – LINDSEY ASTON, ASSISTANT GENERAL COUNSEL, OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Comments from Lindsey Aston, Assistant General Counsel at the Office of the Governor, regarding the Committee following the parameters of the Texas Open Meetings Act as a best practice. In accordance with this best practice, Ms. Aston reminded the council to not collaborate in a quorum or more outside of a public meeting.



Universal Service – The Policy and the Fund

About the Texas Telephone Association (TTA)

TTA is a trade association founded in 1905 that 41 Texas ILEC operating company [members](#). The mission of the TTA is to promote and enhance the performance of its member companies and protect the integrity of the local exchange telephone industry and the services offered within each company's certificated exchange areas within the State of Texas.

- A majority of TTA's ILEC members serve fewer than 5,000 customers each in sparsely populated areas of the state that would not otherwise have service.
- More than one-third are not-for-profit, member-owned telephone cooperatives and all are recipients of Texas Universal Service Fund (TUSF) high-cost support.
- Together TTA's members provide service across 46% of Texas' land mass (more than 124,000 square miles)—an area bigger than 45 states—with an average of 10 households per square mile. Household density outside of TTA member areas is 61 per square mile.
- TTA member cable construction costs per route mile can range from \$30,000 to \$40,000 plus per mile.
- TTA's members provide a weighted average of 110 / 57 Mbps broadband service to households within their service areas, but there continue to be households within the highest-cost, least-populated areas of the state that lack access to faster broadband services.

History of the Policy of Universal Service

- Universal service is the goal that all Americans and all Texans should have access to affordable communications services.
- This policy objective was established by the Communications Act of 1934, and universal service policies have helped make telephone service ubiquitous at reasonable rates, even in rural, high-cost areas.
- Prior to the creation of the Texas Universal Service Fund (TUSF) and the Federal Universal Service Fund (FUSF), the telecommunications industry used various support mechanisms which provided support from larger telecommunications companies to smaller ones and from lower cost urban areas to higher cost rural areas. In other words, the high cost rural areas of Texas have always received support to keep communications services affordable because in most high cost rural areas there simply is not a business case to provide service without some form of support.
- The goals of universal service have evolved over time, and today, digital divide is an issue.

About the Texas Universal Service Fund

- TUSF was originally created by the Texas Legislature in 1987 and has undergone many changes. TUSF is administered by the Public Utility Commission of Texas (Commission) and is currently a \$200-\$220 million annual fund that supports 11 programs created by the Texas Legislature related to rural, high-cost, educational, and low-income service to ensure that Texans have access to affordable voice services. Because of low population density and high fixed network costs, many rural areas of the state simply would not have any service but for TUSF support.

