

City of St. Helens
RESOLUTION NO. 2017

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE FINDINGS FROM BROADBAND
AND DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING AND AUTHORIZING
CITY COUNCIL SUPPORT FOR A DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE
INITIATIVE FOR ST. HELENS AND ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES
TO INCLUDE PREPARTATION OF BEAD FUNDING
PRE-QUALIFICATION REQUIRED FINANCIAL INFORMATION

WHEREAS, the Digital Needs and Readiness Assessment (DNRA) Report, prepared for the City of St. Helens in December 2020, summarized the results of officials and City leaders participating from across the region. DNRA findings showed that leadership acknowledged broadband as an important and relevant issue deserving further attention and room for improvement. The primary emphasis of local leaders was that broadband was needed for economic growth, which included focusing on enhancing workforce skills, attracting and retaining businesses, and improving job opportunities; and

WHEREAS, from July to September 2021, a Broadband Economic Case Analysis indicated that St. Helens could self-finance 93 percent of the cost to connect its anchor institutions with core digital infrastructure by reallocating existing and planned municipal spending on telecom and internet services; and

WHEREAS, to develop a sustainable economic case for building digital infrastructure, the City of St. Helens commissioned an assessment of the existing market conditions and demand for broadband and online services, as well as identify gaps, barriers, and opportunities that need to be addressed by digital inclusion programming; and

WHEREAS, the findings from the broadband market assessment indicated that St. Helens residents and businesses were not satisfied with existing broadband service offerings, and showed demand for more options of affordable, high speed broadband internet service. Detailed findings from the eCheckup and broadband impact and market assessment were presented to City Council in December 2023; and

WHEREAS, at the July 17, 2024 meeting, SNG President, Michael Curri, presented to St. Helens City Council an overview of project findings and recommended next steps to include pursuing digital infrastructure initiative that includes the municipalities of Columbia City and Scappoose, thereby increasing market size and market feasibility; and

WHEREAS, Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program funding requires the submission of pre-qualification materials as detailed by the National

Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) approved Initial Proposal Volume II in order to qualify for future application submittals.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY OF ST. HELENS RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The City of St. Helens will pursue regional digital infrastructure project for the greater St. Helens area that includes Columbia City and Scappoose. This will be in collaboration with Columbia County in a regional approach towards the development of the most viable infrastructure deployment and cost-effective funding available for an open access fiber network.

Section 2. The City of St. Helens authorizes coordination with city public facilities, agencies, and local organizations to gather the necessary BEAD program pre-qualification materials.

Section 3. The City of St. Helens authorizes SNG to act on behalf of city interests in identifying network operators and service providers that may support the digital infrastructure project.

Approved and adopted by the City Council on August 7, 2024 by the following vote:

Ayes:

Nays:

Rick Scholl, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kathy Payne, City Recorder