



MINUTES

Pursuant to the City of Roanoke Emergency Ordinance adopted by the Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission (RVARC) Board on April 23, 2020 and 2021 Virginia General Assembly legislation SB1271 passed February 27, 2021, the March meeting of the RVARC was held virtually via Zoom on Thursday, March 25, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. Under the current State of Emergency, and until further notice, it has been deemed unsafe to assemble a quorum of a public body in one place.

VOTING MEMBERS ATTENDING

Jon Lanford	Alleghany County
Joan Vannorsdall	Alleghany County
Steve Clinton	Botetourt County
Billy Martin, Sr.	Botetourt County
Chris Whitlow	Franklin County
Lorie Smith	Franklin County
Dan O'Donnell	Roanoke County
Phil North, <i>Vice Chair</i>	Roanoke County
David Radford	Roanoke County
Dean Martin	Roanoke County
Lee Osborne	Roanoke County
Krystal Onaitis	City of Covington
Allan Tucker	City of Covington
Bill Bestpitch	City of Roanoke
Stephanie Moon Reynolds	City of Roanoke
Dr. Elda Stanco Downey	City of Roanoke
Robert Jeffrey	City of Roanoke
Frederick Gusler	City of Roanoke
James W. Wallace III	City of Salem
Denise King	City of Salem
Pam Marshall	Town of Clifton Forge
James Ervin	Town of Rocky Mount
Mark Newbill	Town of Rocky Mount
Mayor Bradley Grose, <i>Chair</i>	Town of Vinton
Richard "Pete" Peters	Town of Vinton

VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT

Shannon Cox	Alleghany County
Erin Henderson	Botetourt County
Gary Larrowe	Botetourt County
Dan Collins	Craig County
Jesse Spence	Craig County
Ronald Mitchell	Franklin County
Mike Carter	Franklin County

Member Governments: Counties of Alleghany, Botetourt, Craig, Franklin, and Roanoke, Cities of Covington, Roanoke and Salem, Towns of Clifton Forge, Rocky Mount and Vinton

VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT (Cont'd)

Roy Enslow	Franklin County
Kevin Hutchins	Roanoke County
Peter Volosin	City of Roanoke
John Saunders	City of Salem

NON-VOTING LIAISON MEMBERS ATTENDING

Teresa Hammond	Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce & Tourism
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Others: Terry Durkin, Roanoke Regional Chamber; Terry Austin, Virginia House of Delegates; Kristen Dahlman, Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development; Liz Belcher, Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission.

Staff: Sherry Dean, Jeremy Holmes, Tim Pohlad- Thomas; Cristina Finch, Bryan Hill, Amanda McGee, Matt Miller, Virginia Mullen, Eddie Wells, Gabriel Irigaray and Wayne Strickland.

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, OPENING STATEMENT

Chairman Grose called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and asked Vice Chairman North to read the following opening statement...*“Pursuant to the City of Roanoke Emergency Ordinance adopted by the RVARC on April 23, 2020 and 2021 Virginia General Assembly legislation SB1271 passed February 27, 2021, the March meeting of the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission is being held virtually on Thursday, March 25, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom. Under the current State of Emergency, and until further notice, it has been deemed unsafe to assemble a quorum of a public body in one place. Any members of the public may view and participate in the meeting through electronic means. Meeting details are listed on the second page of the agenda. All materials made available to the members will be made available to the public at the same time by posting on the RVARC website. This meeting is being recorded as always. Due to the virtual nature, video and audio will be recorded and provided on the website in place of written minutes. When the state of emergency ends, draft minutes from all meetings held during this time will be ratified at the next in-person meeting. As a way of ensuring that our meeting goes smoothly, Bryan Hill will serve as the Host for this meeting. All participants are asked to mute themselves to improve audio quality. If any voting Commission member wishes to make a motion, second it, or comment on a motion, please unmute yourself and ask to be recognized by the Chair.”*

Chairman Grose asked Wayne Strickland to call the roll. Mr. Strickland stated that a quorum was in attendance.

2. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

The Consent Agenda items were as follows:

- A. Approval of Agenda
- B. February 25, 2021 Minutes
- C. Financial Reports Ending February 28, 2021

Chair Grose noted that Delegate Terry Austin asked to speak to the Commission, therefore the agenda would need to be amended to allow time for Mr. Austin's presentation.

MOTION: by Billy Martin to approve the Consent Agenda items, as amended. The motion was seconded by Allan Tucker.

Regional Commission Action: Roll Call Vote: Ayes – 25 (Lanford, Vannorsdall, Clinton, B. Martin, Whitlow, Smith, O'Donnell, D. Martin, Radford, North, Osborne, Onaitis, Tucker, Bestpitch, Moon Reynolds, Dr. Stanco Downey, Jeffrey, Gusler, Wallace, King, Marshall, Ervin, Newbill, Grose, Peters); Nays – 0; Nays – 0; Abstentions – 0. Motion carried unanimously.

Delegate Terry Austin announced that in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP), the Commonwealth of Virginia will receive \$3.6 billion in federal assistance funding. Some of these funds could be directed to support a very important and crucial transportation project for our region project, specifically highway improvements to I-81 between mile markers 167 and 170. The project has been a regional priority for the RVARC and has been submitted four times for SMART scale funding. Some modest improvements to the I-81 have been done but the funds have not been enough for the total realignment of that stretch of the Interstate. Delegate Austin will submit a request for \$200 million appropriation for the realignment of I-81 between mile markers 167 and 170. Delegate Austin asked the Commission members for their support in the form of a letter of endorsement to Secretary Valentine and Governor Northam.

Delegate Terry Austin thanked the Commission members for the privilege to speak and for their outstanding work for the region.

MOTION: by Phil North, the Commission to provide letter of support for highway improvements to I-81 between mile markers 167 and 170. The motion was seconded by Bill Bestpitch.

Regional Commission Action: Roll Call Vote: Ayes – 24 (Lanford, Vannorsdall, Clinton, B. Martin, Whitlow, Smith, O'Donnell, D. Martin, Radford, North, Osborne, Onaitis, Tucker, Bestpitch, Dr. Stanco Downey, Jeffrey, Gusler, Wallace, King, Marshall, Ervin, Newbill, Grose, Peters); Nays – 0; Nays – 0; Abstentions – 0. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. James Irvin encouraged the Commission to package its priorities and be ready to compete for the upcoming infrastructure funds. Mr. North commented that Mr. Irvin made a great point. He added that the state will receive money from the American infrastructure bill to support the infrastructure of roads and bridges and that the Commission should be thinking about a resolution of support for future infrastructure projects. Mr. North also suggested at the next meeting the Commission to advocate in some way for the infrastructure bill.

Delegate Austin noted that he has been working on another project called "Southern Connector". The Southern Connector is a proposed roadway that would run from the

North Carolina line north to the U.S. 220/U.S. 58 bypass. Delegate Austin encouraged members to support this very important project as well.

3. **UPDATE ON VA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

Kristen Dahlman, Policy and Legislative Director for the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development presented an update on housing and community development programs. (The PowerPoint presentation is included with the Minutes.)

4. **APPROVAL OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE TITLE VI IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Rachel Ruhlen reported that the Virginia Department of Transportation conducted Title VI Compliance reviews of MPOs and PDCs across the state and found many, including the RVARC, were not in compliance. The RVARC Title VI Implementation Plan referenced Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and related nondiscrimination authorities, but the Federal Highway Administration has indicated that Title VI Implementation should only address discrimination based on race, color, and national origin and should not address related nondiscrimination authorities such as age, sex, and disability.

Mr. Bestpitch wondered why the additional categories created a problem. Mr. Strickland responded that the Virginia Department of Transportation indicated that the Federal Highway Administration wants only the Title VI categories of discrimination and anything further should not be noted in the Plan. Mr. Bestpitch questioned the use of Virginia Department of Transportation resources and time to be reviewing MPO/PDC Title VI Implementation Plans for compliance with this arbitrary ruling.

MOTION: by Moon Reynolds to approve the resolution to amend the Title VI Implementation Plan, as presented. The motion was seconded by Allan Tucker.

Regional Commission Action: Roll Call Vote: Ayes – 19 (Lanford, Vannorsdall, Whitlow, Smith, O'Donnell, D. Martin, Radford, North, Osborne, Onaitis, Tucker, Moon Reynolds, Gusler, Wallace, King, Marshall, Ervin, Grose, Peters); Nays – 3 (Bestpitch, Dr. Stanco Downey, Jeffery); Nays – 0; Abstentions – 0. Motion carried unanimously.

5. **REMARKS BY THE CHAIR**

Chair Grose announced that Wayne Strickland will retire in June as Executive Director of the Regional Commission after 42 years, with 34 of those years serving as Executive Director. Mr. Strickland, working with the member governments and commission staff, had assisted the region in many ways. There have been only five executive directors of the Commission over the past 50 years. Chair Grose stated that a Search Committee has been formed to assist in the selection of the new RVARC Executive Director. The Committee includes the following eight members: Chair Grose, Vice Chair Phil North, Treasurer Dean Martin, Past Chair Billy Martin, Former Chair Bill Bestpitch, Former Chair Lee Osborne, Joan Vannorsdall and Allan Tucker.

6. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Strickland commented that it was a hard decision to retire after 42 years of service. He noted that he is most proud of the fact that the current commission members and their predecessors have allowed the Commission staff to undertake many important projects over the past five decades. The members have supported and encouraged the Commission to look at numerous issues- from helping local governments with compensation studies to looking at developing a Broadband Authority. Mr. Strickland stated that he is also very proud of the Commission staff and the quality work that they have produced.

Chair Grose expressed his appreciation for Mr. Strickland's steady leadership.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

8. COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS AND/OR THE PUBLIC

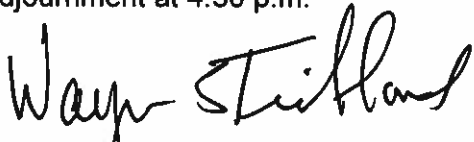
Mayor Marshall commented that Mr. Strickland will be missed terribly.

Mr. Lee Osborne commented that he started working with the Commission in the early 1990s, served as the Chair from 1995 to 1999, and continued to serve first as Roanoke City and later as Roanoke County Representative. Mr. Strickland has done an outstanding job in the very difficult and complex task of pursuing regional cooperative projects and in maintaining a very professional staff. The Commission will have a very hard time finding his replacement.

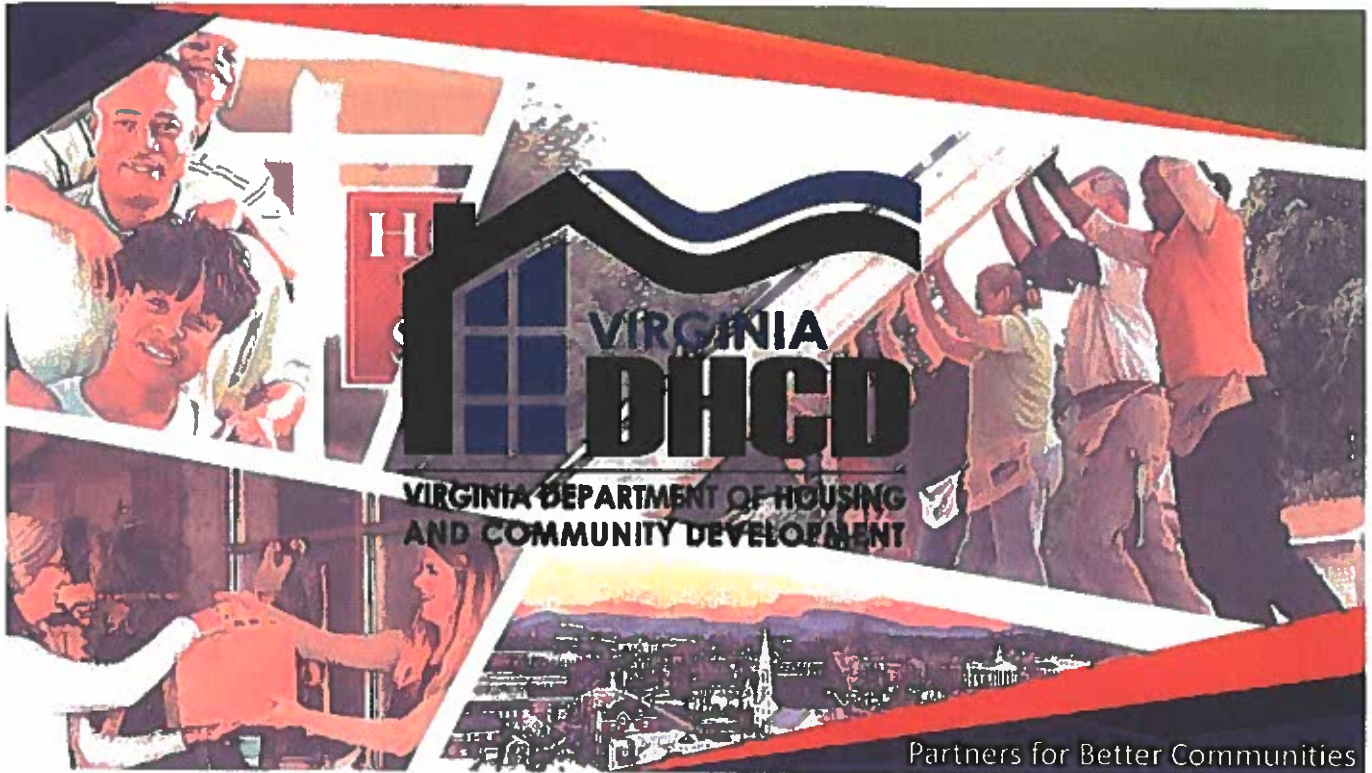
Mr. North thanked Wayne for making him feel so welcomed when he was appointed to the RVTPO and RVARC and expressed his best wishes with the retirement.

Chair Grose reminded that the FY22 Work Program Committee will have their meeting following the adjournment of the Commission meeting.

Adjournment at 4:30 p.m.



Wayne Strickland, Secretary
Secretary to the Regional Commission



DHCD Updates

Presentation to the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional
Commission
March 25, 2021

**Kristen Dahlman, Policy & Legislative Director
Department of Housing and Community Development**

Partners for Better Communities

Mission Statement

DHCD is committed to creating safe, affordable and prosperous communities to live, work and do business in Virginia.



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Virginia Main Street Program

\$1.5 million budget increase to aid in recovery

- \$1 million- Grants & Technical assistance for communities to deploy with their businesses
 - Virginia Main Street Recovery (paid to non-profits and governmental agencies)
 - Direct Small Business and Entrepreneurial Support and Training
 - Assist local businesses in moving to e-commerce
 - Support façade and systems improvement programs
 - Develop promotional campaigns in support of local businesses
 - Technical Assistance
 - E-commerce development
 - Marketing and promotions
 - Feasibility studies
 - Façade renderings and floor plan development
 - Market studies and prospectus development
- \$500,000- Community Business Launch
 - Serve communities with assistance for new and existing businesses

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Potential New CDFI Program

\$10 million proposed in new General Funding for CDFI Fund

- Program to provide capital through grants to community development financial institutions (CDFIs), community development enterprises (CDE), or other such similar entities as permitted by law, whose primary purpose is to provide financing in the form of loans, grants or forgivable loans to small business or community revitalization real estate projects in Virginia.
- Constitute a one-time appropriation of funding to capitalize this program
- Fill in gaps from other small business relief through new federal stimulus funding

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Community Vitality Series

The “work from home” revolution is just getting started and causing people to reevaluate where they call home. As a result, communities have the unique opportunity to better position themselves for success by ensuring that they have the amenities, infrastructure and social offerings in place to retain and attract an increasingly mobile workforce.

Join DHCD for this monthly training series, separated into three-parts, focused on building your place’s identity, supportive ecosystems and community in a format promoting monthly education, inspiration and application.

- ***Leadership + Networks: Strategically Aligning Your Resources***

April 14, 2021

Registration

- More information

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The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program will assist units of local government and communities in response to the health and economic impact of COVID-19 by supporting planning grant, open submission and urgent need recovery activities.

Eligible Activities

- Food security or food pantry support
- Housing and homeless services
- Small business relief assistance
- Non-congregate shelter support
- Construction or rehab of structures to be used for shelters, testing or equipment manufacturing
- Acquisition costs for telework/telemedicine services
- Job creation or business development for manufacturing of COVID-related materials, supplies or equipment (PPE)

How to Apply

- Eligible localities (small cities, towns and rural communities) should submit a letter of interest describing the project need and its activities to DHCD. Letters can be attached via email and sent to matthew.weaver@dhcd.virginia.gov
- Neighbors in Need

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CDBG Applications are due April 1, DHCD has open submission round from April 1 to December 31

- Economic Development & Entrepreneurship (\$1,000,000 -- \$1,250,000)
- Construction Ready Water & Sewer (\$800,000)
- Regional Water/Wastewater (\$2,500,000)
- Urgent Need (\$1,000,000)
- Planning Grants to help develop projects (\$700,000)

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Housing Trust Fund & RGGI Proceeds

- **Virginia Housing Trust Fund**
 - \$70.7 million for FY 2021
 - \$55 million for FY 2022
- **Housing Innovations in Energy Efficiency**
 - March auction RGGI proceeds: \$43 million
 - 50% to come to DHCD per Code of Virginia for low income energy efficiency and eligible housing developments (\$21.7 million)
 - ASNH and DHCD Weatherization program first allocations for HIEE program

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HTF Projects

- **South River Development Corporation (\$600,000) Town of Clifton Forge, Alleghany Apartments**
- **Council of Community Services (\$35,000 in 2019 and \$140,000 in 2021)**
 - **Rapid Rehousing services**

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Rent Relief Program

- Through March 10, RRP has processed and dispersed more than \$114,230,000 million in rent and mortgage relief payments for 29,647 households throughout Virginia. In total, 25,297 households have received rental relief payments, and 551 households have received mortgage relief payments.
- Virginia received \$524 million in first ERA tranche of funding
 - \$Over \$50 million has been dispersed thus far
- Landlord and tenant portals
- Interested in helping us spread the word? Please contact us for ways to learn more about the program and direct people to apply!

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**VIRGINIA INITIATIVE FOR
GROWTH &
OPPORTUNITY
IN EACH REGION**

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Virginia Growth and Opportunity
Fund FY21 - \$34.45 m

Regional Capacity Building

\$2.25 m

\$250,000/region
Provides support for administrative efforts to each regional council and may also be used towards projects

Regional Per Capita Projects

\$17.56 m

Based on Regional Population Data with \$1m floor drawn from competitive

Region 1 - \$1,000,000
Region 2 - \$1,545,403
Region 3 - \$1,000,000
Region 4 - \$2,515,225
Region 5 - \$3,425,064
Region 6 - \$1,016,222
Region 7 - \$4,990,678
Region 8 - \$1,069,775
Region 9 - \$1,000,000

Statewide Competitive Projects

\$14.64 m

Discretionary pot of funding awarded by the GO Virginia Board on a competitive basis

The GO Virginia State Board allocated \$14.66M in unobligated statewide competitive funds (FY20) to create the Economic Resilience and Recovery Program

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RECENT PROGRAM ACTIVITY

- **Economic Resilience and Recovery Initiative**
- **Relaxed Match Requirements**
- **Site Policy Amendments and Administrative Guidance Workgroup**

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PROVIDING FOR
GROWTH &
OPPORTUNITY

ECONOMIC RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY INITIATIVE

- **\$1.0 M Allotted to Each GO Virginia Region PLUS additional flexibility with \$500K in per capita funding**
- **For Activities That Mitigate the Economic Impact of the Pandemic**
 - **Reevaluate priorities in Growth and Diversification plans;**
 - **Prioritize identified industry targets based on immediate impact and influence on the regional economy;**
 - **Assess community and business needs; and**
 - **Focus resources on actionable strategies that expand or build needed capacity and that support sustaining and expanding firms in targeted industry clusters and/or highly impacted locally traded sectors as identified by the regional councils;**

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ERR FUNDED PROJECTS IN THE REGION

- **Rapid High-Throughput COVID-19 testing (Virginia Tech Office of Vice President for Health Sciences and Technology)**
 - **To support an initial 90-day start-up phase for 2 testing sites located in Blacksburg and Roanoke to help large numbers of people receive timely COVID-19 test results. A task force from Virginia Tech has been assembled to work on various aspects of the project. To date, the team has developed and finalized validation for COVID-19 testing and stood up two Fralin laboratory facilities. GO Virginia funds will be used to support the salaries of the newly hired Medical Laboratory Specialists (MLS), Medical Laboratory Technicians (MLT), and student interns at both sites to help scale-up the operation and purchase testing supplies needed for sample analysis.**
- **Pivot and RAMP Up (Blacksburg Roanoke Technology Council)**
 - **To help the region sustain the momentum of accelerating growth businesses that generate high-wage jobs, extend the benefits of the Program to more companies throughout the region by offering education, mentoring and business assistance programming virtually and by providing continuing services to accelerator graduates.**

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RELAXED MATCH REQUIREMENTS

2:1 Match For All Projects Using Per Capita Funds

- **Planning, Pilots, Feasibility Studies**
- **Entrepreneurship Strategies**
- **Implementation Projects (All 4 Investment Priorities)**
- **Middle-mile Broadband**

2:1 Match For ERR Initiative Resources

- **Regional And Statewide Implementation Projects Designed To Mitigate The Economic Impact of the Pandemic**

1:1 Match For Statewide Competitive Projects

- **Significant Statewide Impact And Extraordinary Economic Opportunities**

NO Local Match Required

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SITE POLICY AMENDMENTS AND GUIDANCE

- **Approved The Use Of GOVA Funds For Privately Owned Sites**
- **Created A 25 Acres Minimum For Sites Projects, With A Waiver Provision**
- **Workgroup Includes One Member From Each Region as Well as VEDP**
- **Developing Guidance Document For Implementing Board Policy**
 - **Emphasis On “Regionally Significant Sites”**
 - **Prioritization Must be Demonstrated – Data Driven Decision Making**
 - **Two or More Participating Localities – Regional Collaboration**
 - **ETA for Final Guidance - April 9**

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Responsibilities

- Assist communities with Broadband Planning efforts
- Provide technical assistance to stakeholders on accessing Tribal and Federal broadband programs
- Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI)
 - Technical Assistance (pre and post application)
 - Grants Management
- Oversight of the State Broadband Map

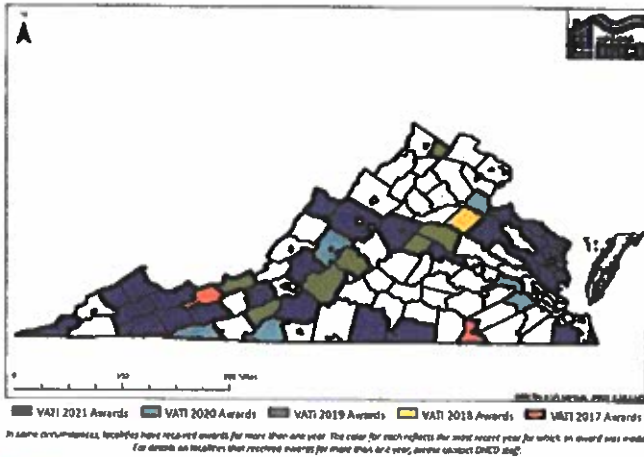
Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI)

- Currently \$49.725 million annually, Governor's introduced budget increases by \$15 million annually to keep at this level.
- The VATI program, administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), funds public-private partnerships to supplement broadband infrastructure construction costs to extend service to areas not served by a broadband provider.
- VATI funds one-time capital improvement projects to build last-mile broadband to unserved communities.
- Previous investments have been critical to households and businesses during the pandemic and this investment is both an emergency response to the pandemic and a long term investment in achieving universal coverage.

Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI)

- Since 2017, over \$74 million has been awarded to 56 localities and connected 78,035 Virginia residents, businesses and community anchor institutions to broadband. Underscoring the demand and competitive nature of the program, during that same time period, VATI received 145 applications totaling \$205 million in requests.

Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI) Grant Awards 2017 - 2021



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Impact and Demand for VATI 2017-2021

- 145 Applications Received
- \$166,439,630 requested
- \$74,700,000 awarded
- \$86,310,641 leveraged
- 78,035 connections
- 56 projects awarded funding

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CARES Act Broadband Funding Awards

30,822

Virginia Homes and Business Connected

24,026

More Locations with access to broadband

6,796

Locations with more affordable broadband

71

Total Projects

50

Localities Served

Projects by Type:

5 Affordability

33 Last Mile - Fiber

12 Last Mile - Fixed Wireless

11 Middle Mile

2 Mobile Hotspot

8 Public Wifi

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