

PUBLIC COMMENT NOTICE

The Amherst County Broadband Authority, a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia under the Wireless Service Authorities Act, intends to file a grant application with Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VHCD) under its 2019 Virginia Telecommunications Initiative Program (VATI), with its private partner, Acelanet LLC, doing business as SCS Broadband. In accordance with the VATI Program Guidelines, the Amherst County Broadband Authority is requesting public comments as to its submission of a grant.

The Authority and SCS are seeking funding for accelerated and expanded buildout of the wireless Internet network provided for in their public-private partnership Comprehensive Agreement. The Authority is a wireless service authority organized as a political subdivision of the Commonwealth authorized to participate as a partner in providing Internet services. On October 17, 2017, SCS submitted a conceptual proposal under the Act. Following advertisement for competing proposals, the Authority elected to continue to the detail phase of consideration with SCS, and to begin negotiating a Comprehensive Agreement for a Qualifying Project designed to provide technology, equipment, and infrastructure designed to deploy wireless broadband internet services to schools, businesses, and residential areas. On July 17, 2018, the Authority held a public hearing on whether to enter a Comprehensive Agreement, and advertised this Agreement for 30 days for comments. SCS is a wireless internet service provider (WISP) with years of experience providing the infrastructure, goods, and services agreed upon, and is capable of providing the services contemplated herein. The purpose of the agreement is to provide ubiquitous high-speed internet to the unserved and underserved public in Amherst County at fair, reasonable, and uniform prices. The term of the agreement is five-year initial term with three renewals of five years each, contingent on continued achievement of deployment, customer satisfaction and service targets. SCS plans to deploy equipment on towers located at High Peak, Buffalo Ridge, Panther Mountain, Amherst Control and Rocky Mountain. Additional towers such as Turkey Mountain may be considered. The Agreement also provides for additional optional phases to be negotiated at a later date if necessary and feasible.

In order to provide a record to the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, comments should be addressed to Dean Rodgers, County Administrator for Amherst County. The preferred methods of comment would be by email to dcrogers@countyofamherst.com or by letter sent to Dean Rodgers P.O. Box 390, Amherst, VA 24521. Comment will also be received by telephone (434) 946-9400. These comments will be recorded. Public comment will be open from Thursday, November 29, 2018 to Friday, December 14, 2018. A complete list of all of the comments will be sent to VHCD. DHCD will post electronic copies of all submitted applications to the agency website after the deadline for application submissions has passed and before project approval. Any private sector service provider wishing to request that DHCD deem a proposed project area as ineligible for VATI must submit a challenge with the information required in this section no later than 5:00 p.m. on January 15, 2019. DHCD will have 30 business days to validate a challenge.