

Approved Minutes

A regular meeting of the Albemarle County Broadband Authority was held on March 21, 2023. The meeting was held in room 241 of the Albemarle County Office Building located at 401 McIntire Road.

PRESENT: Mr. Bucky Walsh, Mr. Waldo Jaquith, Ms. Donna Price, Mr. Jim Andrews, Mr. Trevor Henry, Mr. Bill Fritz

ABSENT: None

Also Present: Mr. Richard DeLoria (Senior Assistant County Attorney), Mike Culp (Director of Broadband Accessibility and Affordability Office) and Jason Inofuentes (Program Manager, Broadband Accessibility and Affordability Office)

Agenda Item No. 1. Establish Quorum and Call to Order.

Mr. Walsh established a quorum and called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Agenda Item No. 2 Approval of Agenda

Mr. Walsh **moved** to approve the agenda.

Mr. Henry **seconded** the motion.

The motion was **approved** unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 3 Brief Announcements from the Board

Mr. Andrews stated that there will be a town hall meeting on the budget at Yancey Elementary school on Thursday.

Agenda Item No. 4 Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

There were no members of the public present for the meeting.

There were seven virtual attendees.

Agenda Item No. 5 Consent Agenda

Mr. Andrews **moved** to approve the agenda.

Ms. Price **seconded** the motion.

The motion was **approved** unanimously.

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Agenda Item No. 6 Approval of February 22, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Ms. Price **moved** to approve the minutes.

Mr. Andrews **seconded** the motion.

The motion was **approved** unanimously.

Agenda Item No.7 Old Business

Agenda Item No. 7a VATI 2021 Update Corrective Action Plan and Letter of Findings Response

Mr. Culp shared a PowerPoint presentation. (Attached to these minutes)

Mr. Culp introduced Mr. Schollman who was attending via Zoom.

Mr. Schollman stated that rock on Stony Point Pass has been an issue. Mr. Schollman stated they are pushing to complete the work by the end of the month.

Mr. Culp discussed pricing and stated that questions remain on how a credit will be implemented to maintain costs for new customers at the level of prior customers.

Mr. Schollman stated that he is working on getting an answer to the credit question and would get back to Mr. Culp.

Mr. Inofuentes stated that community effort played a large role in getting Brightspeed to maintain costs for new customers at the same level as others in VATI 2021.

Mr. Inofuentes discussed the take rate and pending connections.

Mr. Henry noted that the trend line on pending connections are in a good direction.

Mr. Henry asked if Brightspeed will give an update at the end of the month on the status of VATI 2021.

Mr. Culp stated that he will work on getting something to ABBA.

Agenda Item No. 7b VATI 2022 Update

Mr. Culp shared a PowerPoint presentation. (Attached to these minutes)

Mr. Culp introduced Mr. Gary Wood from CVEC who was attending via Zoom.

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Mr. Culp stated that CVEC members are signing up now and getting connected in White Hall and Schulyer.

Mr. Wood stated that make ready work by AEP was continuing. Backbone fiber in the Red Hill area is installed across the railroad and Route 29 and is now moving south along Route 29. Mr. Wood stated the in the Keene area AEP need to complete make ready engineering. The design work should be completed in July/August and construction with the make ready completed by the early part of next year.

Mr. Wood stated that there is a Town Hall meeting for Red Hill on April 20th. Connections are expected in spring 2024 for the Red Hill area.

Mr. Wood stated that White Hall has 2,071 passings with 850 signed up and about 250 connections completed. Red Hill has 470 passings with 270 signed up.

Mr. Wood noted that they were holding a celebration of reaching 20,000 connections. Mr. Wood noted that they had zero connections in 2019.

Agenda Item No. 7c VATI 2023 Planning

Mr. Culp shared a PowerPoint presentation. (Attached to these minutes)

Mr. Culp stated that he is still waiting for an announcement from DHCD.

Ms. Price asked what the prognosis is for Rolling Mill/Jefferson Mill area.

Mr. Culp stated that area is served by Comcast and wasn't included due to the limit imposed by DHCD. The area did not previously qualify and he is waiting to hear from DHCD so that a plan can be developed on how to serve those areas.

Mr. Inofuentes stated that the Broadband Office is trying to get the areas in VATI 2023 connected with the VATI 2022 timeline because they are filling holes surrounded by VATI 2022.

Agenda Item No. 8 New Business

Mr. Inofuentes shared the Broadband Accessibility and Affordability office report as a PowerPoint presentation. (Attached to these minutes)

Mr. Inofuentes stated that they are trying to understand the impact of lack of access to broadband and identify barriers to access. Mr. Inofuentes stated the information will be published in May.

Mr. Henry asked if programs would be recommended to address any identified issues.

Mr. Inofuentes stated that it is intended to be an actionable policy. Recommendations may include

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equipment, training and potential language barriers.

Mr. Inofuentes stated the Outreach Grant was awarded by not for the full amount. They received about \$250,000. Our area only has a 15% take rate and they hope to get to 75%.

Ms. Price asked if incidents of complaints have dropped for quality of service.

Mr. Culp stated that construction activities have created disruptions and have led to complaints.

Ms. Price noted that the construction activities will stop. Ms. Price asked if the old equipment complaints have gone down.

Mr. Jaquith stated that new construction has replaced some of the old equipment leading to a drop in problems.

Mr. Inofuentes stated that complaints are down.

Agenda Item No. 9 Other Matters

Mr. Fritz noted that page 2 of the draft status report appeared to have a drafting error.

Agenda Item No. 10 Adjourn

Ms. Price **moved** to adjourn.

Mr. Andrews **seconded** the motion.

The motion was **approved** unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

5. FOR APPROVAL (by recorded vote):

No items

5. FOR APPROVAL (Information Only)

5.1 Albemarle Broadband Authority Financial Report as of March, 14, 2023

Update: 03/14/2023

4-4300-91097-491097-950030-9999 (EXPENSE CODE) + ARPA 5301 Fund

BROADBAND INCENTIVES>ALBEMARLE BROADBAND AUTHORITY + ARPA Funding

	Fund Balance	Commitment/ Projected Expenses	Paid Expenses	Remaining Project Funds
Current FY23 Balance (includes \$4.5mil in ARPA Appropriation, \$4.37mil of that for VATI 2022)	\$5,099,325.90			
VATI 2021 Project Commitment Brightspeed: Payment on Hold		\$640,000.00	\$0.00	
VATI 2022 Project Commitment TJPDC/Firefly: First payment for \$121,863.50 PAID		\$4,368,000.00	\$121,863.50	
	\$91,325.90	\$5,008,000.00	\$121,863.50	\$91,325.90
<i>Note: Remaining Project Funds unless noted otherwise are subject to ARPA Guidelines and Rules.</i>				



Albemarle Broadband Authority

March 21, 2023



Agenda

1. Establish Quorum and Call to Order
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Brief Announcements by Authority Members
4. Public Comment
5. Consent Agenda
6. Approval of February 22, 2023 Meeting Minutes
7. Old Business
 - a) VATI 2021 Update
 - b) VATI 2022 Update
 - c) VATI 2023 Planning
8. New Business
9. Adjourn



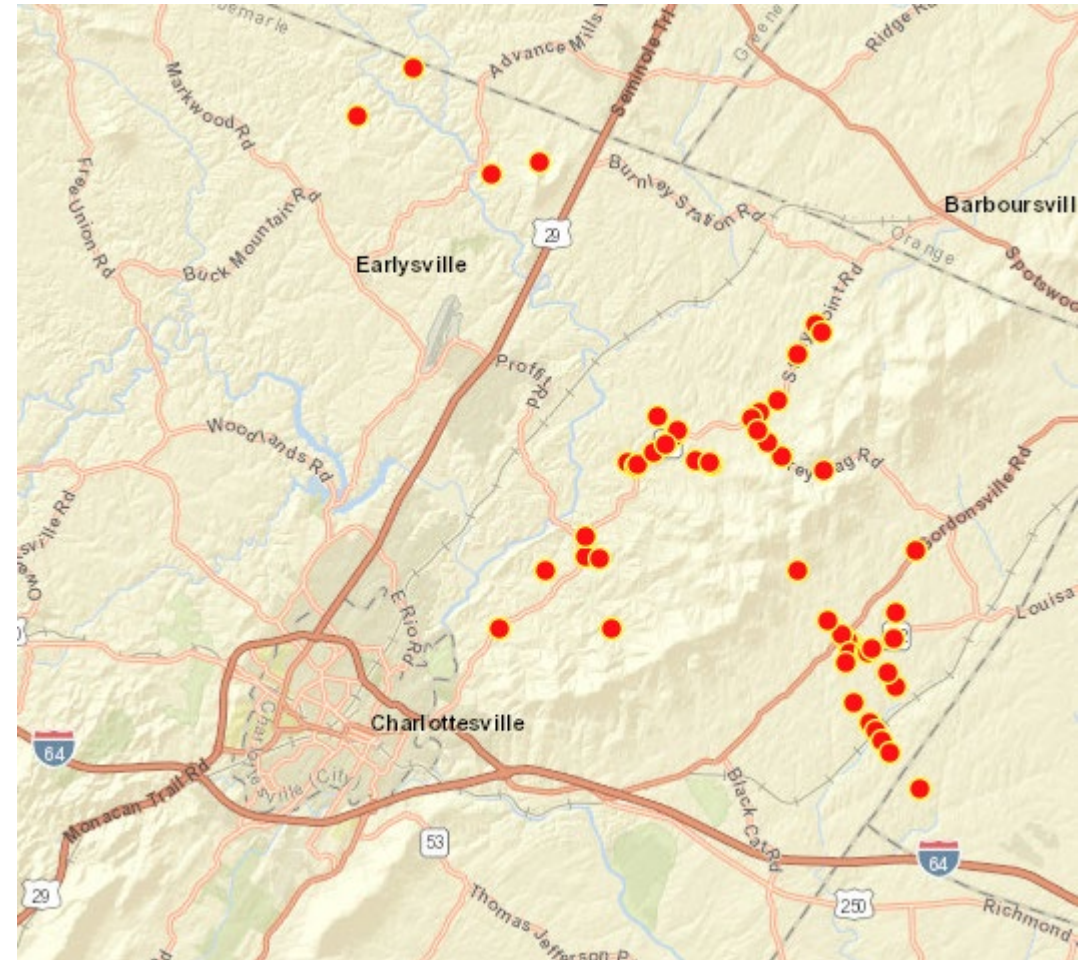
VATI 2021 Update - Construction

- Construction continues in the Bell's Store Tranche and the Campbell and Cobham Areas
- Brightspeed efforts are focused on completing all construction activities by March 31st
- Orders may now be placed in the Eastham and Stony Point Elementary Tranches



VATI 2021 Update - Construction

Significant crew presence throughout the project areas. Evidence of fiber construction and completion of construction work throughout the project areas.





VATI 2021 Update - Pricing

- Immediately preceding the March webinar, Brightspeed announced a pricing increase
- BAAO delayed the webinar to obtain questions to answers associated with this price increase
- Given the impact on residents that should have already been able to place their orders and the potential impact on take rate, we had asked Brightspeed to delay this pricing for VATI 21 customers



VATI 2021 Update - Pricing

- Monday evening we were able to announce that Brightspeed has decided to provide a special discount for VATI 21 customers to restore the original pricing for the top tier plan
- Questions remain about the implementation of this credit
- More updates to follow



VATI 2021 Update

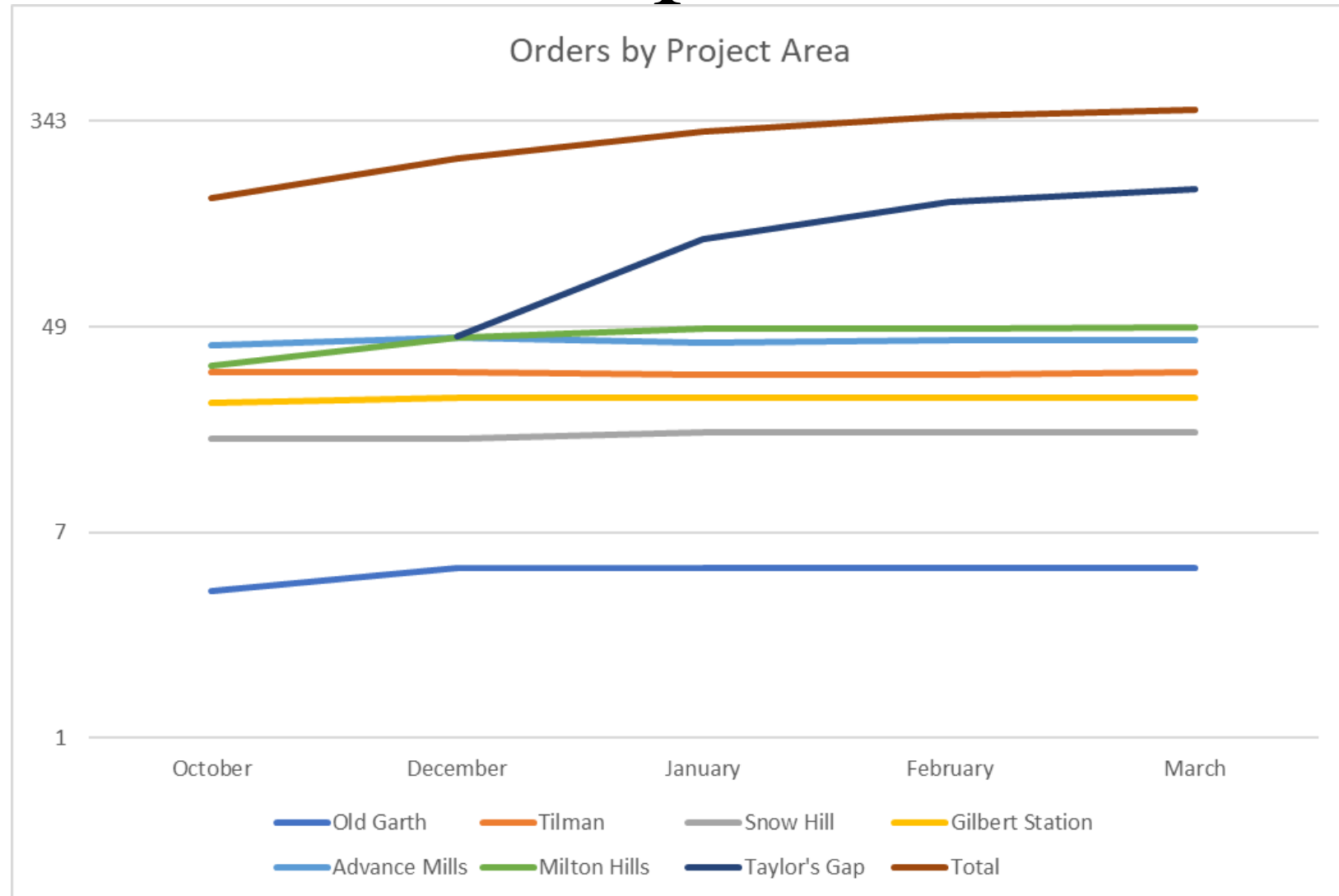
Last updated: March 20, 2023

Project Areas	October				December				January			
	Orders	Pending	Active	Take Rate	Orders	Pending	Active	Take Rate	Orders	Pending	Active	Take Rate
Jones Mill	13	2	11	23%	30	9	21	53%	30	3	27	53%
Old Garth	4	0	4	67%	5	1	4	83%	5	1	4	83%
Tilman	32	7	25	67%	32	4	28	67%	31	3	28	65%
Snow Hill	17	2	15	24%	17	1	16	24%	18	1	17	25%
Gilbert Statio	24	0	24	52%	25	1	24	54%	25	1	24	54%
Advance Mill	41	8	33	34%	44	7	37	36%	42	0	42	34%
Milton Hills	34	23	11	20%	44	20	24	26%	48	11	37	28%
Taylor's Gap					45	33	12	19%	112	34	78	48%
Total	165	42	123	32%	242	76	166	32%	311	54	257	41%

Project Areas	February				March				Current Passings
	Orders	Pending	Active	Take Rate	Orders	Pending	Active	Take Rate	
Jones Mill	31	1	30	54%	31	1	30	54%	57
Old Garth	5	0	5	83%	5	0	5	83%	6
Tilman	31	4	27	65%	32	3	29	67%	48
Snow Hill	18	1	17	25%	18	1	17	25%	71
Gilbert Statio	25	1	24	54%	25	0	25	54%	46
Advance Mill	43	0	43	35%	43	0	43	35%	122
Milton Hills	48	9	39	28%	49	6	43	28%	172
Taylor's Gap	160	37	123	45%	180	13	167	51%	352
Total	361	53	308	41%	383	24	359	44%	874

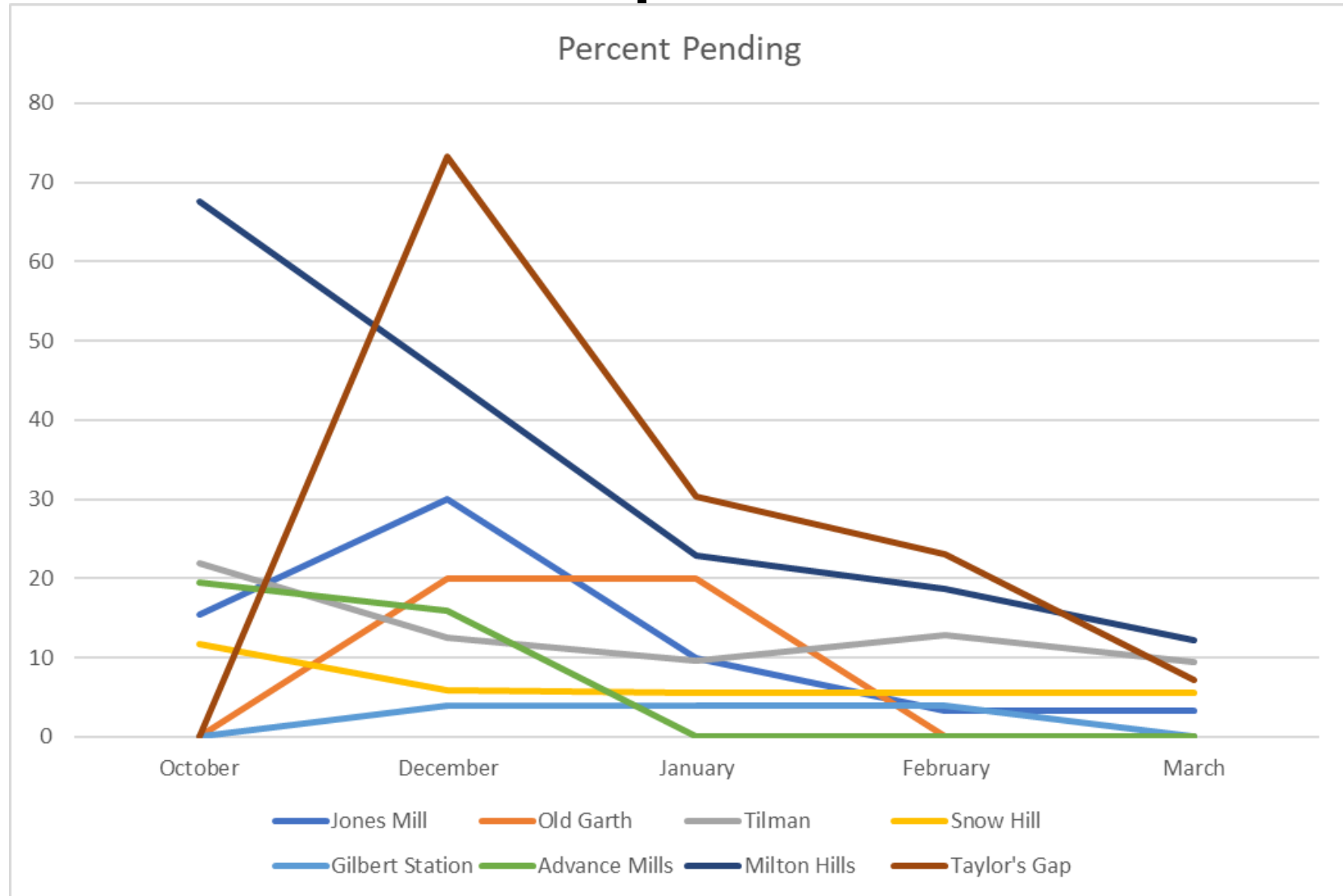


VATI 2021 Update





VATI 2021 Update





VATI 2022 Update



- Dominion is currently expanding its middle mile infrastructure in Albemarle County including on Pantops
- Make-ready work continues in the AEP and REC areas
- Firefly expects to make connections in the AEP Red Hill area in Spring 2023 and
- REC Stanardsville areas in Fall 2023
- Firefly project tracking page for Albemarle: [Partners-Albemarle - Firefly Fiber Broadband \(fireflyva.com\)](https://partners-albemarle-fireflyfiberbroadband.com)

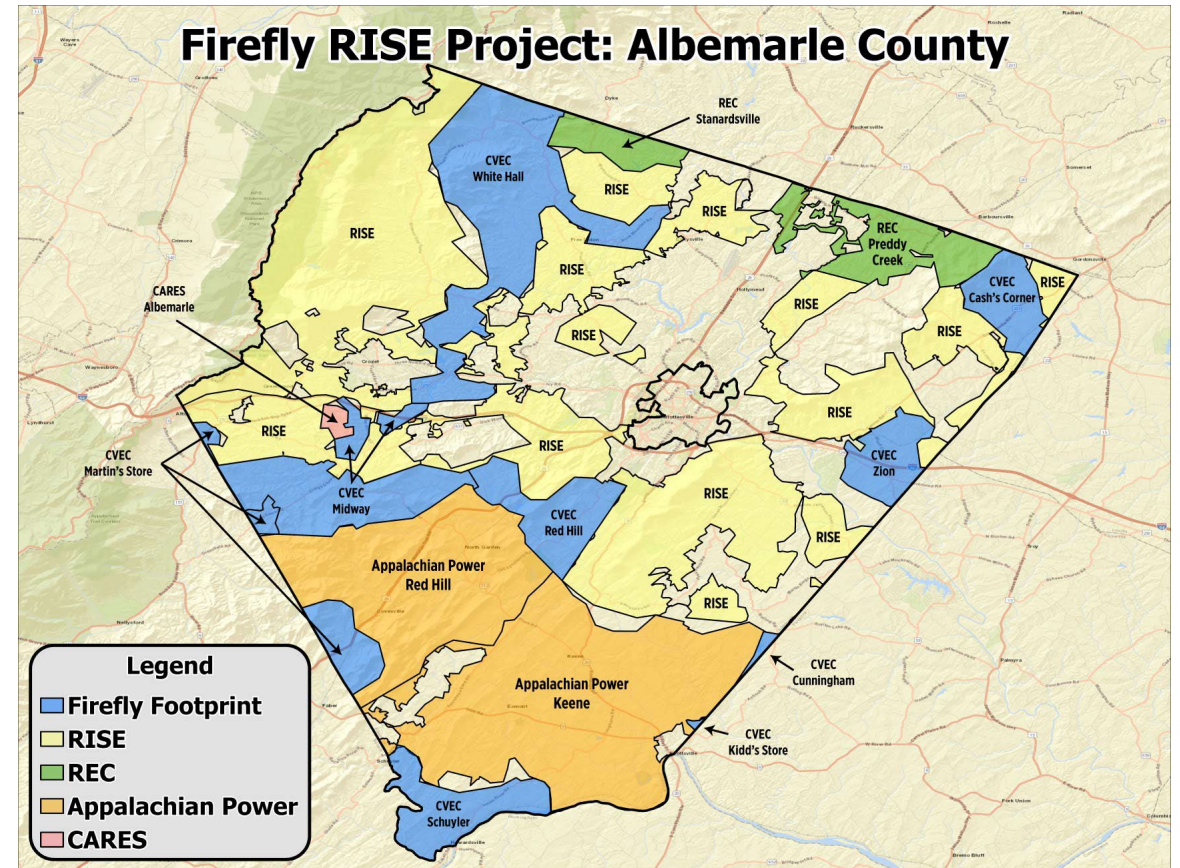


VATI 2022 Update

RISE - Appalachian Power

Albemarle County

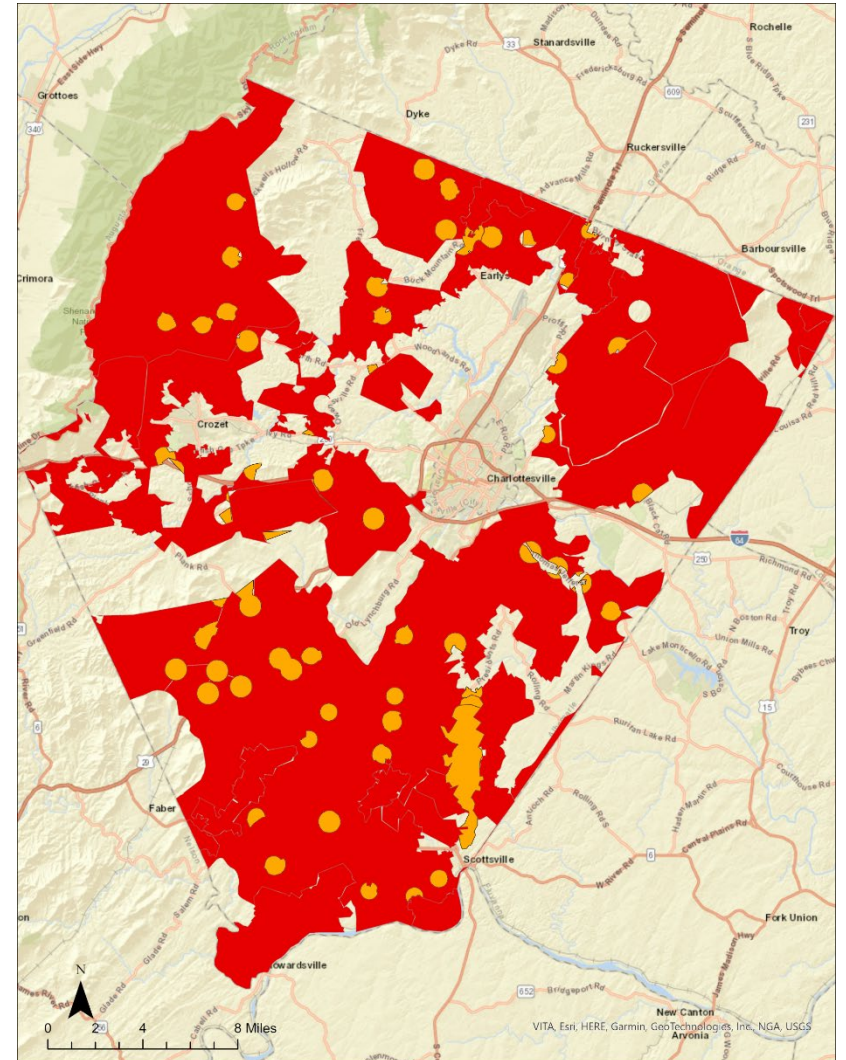
Red Hill	Spring 2023
Keene	TBD
Sweet Hills	TBD





VATI 2023 Application

- 1,575 Passings
- Projected total budget of \$8.8M
- VATI Request: \$3.6M
- BAAO Match: \leq \$440,000
- Awaiting Award Decision





ABBA Financial Report

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BAAO Report

- Regional Digital Equity Plan (RDEP) Activities
- ACP Outreach Grant Application



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