



Marin Telecommunications Agency

Revised Strategic Plan

Marin Telecommunications Agency

555 Northgate Drive, #102

San Rafael, CA 94903

TEL 415-446-4427

www.mtamarin.org

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Introduction

On January 23, 2016 members of the Marin Telecommunications Agency (MTA) Board of Directors (Board), staff, representatives from interested organizations such as the Community Media Center of Marin (CMCM), members of the public and the MTA's Consultant, CBG Communications, Inc. (CBG) met to discuss the existing Strategic Plan (developed in the Fall of 2007 and the Winter of 2008 and approved in March 2008) and updating and revising the Strategic Plan to include Strategic Initiatives and Directions for the present time as well as into the future. During the Strategic Planning Workshop, participants reviewed MTA's progress and history since inception of the Strategic Plan in 2008; assessed the current status of the MTA; discussed what the MTA needs, and or wants as an organization going forward; and then discussed ways to proceed in the future to meet goals and achieve objectives.

The findings from the workshop were reviewed by staff and CBG and a draft updated and revised Strategic Plan was developed for review by the MTA's Finance and Policy (F&P) Committee. At the March 31st and April 27th, 2016 meetings of the F&P Committee, the findings from the session, as well as the draft updated Strategic Plan, were reviewed and further discussed. Directions were given to staff and CBG to modify the initial draft Strategic Plan and delineate the Strategic Direction Actions into Required Actions that could be done within MTA's current funding level and Desired Actions that are outside of the MTA's current funding level. And to identify the resources required for the Desired Actions should the Board over time allocate additional funding for the Desired Actions.

Subsequently, at its August 10, 2016 meeting the full Board reviewed the updated Strategic Plan, as well as the associated resources projected, and directed staff and CBG to proceed with the development of the final Plan, with modifications noted at the meeting. The Board then considered the final, revised and updated Plan at its November 30, 2016 meeting and approved the Plan. The approved Strategic Plan as revised, updated and described herein, incorporates all of the preceding discussion, review and analysis into a set of updated Strategic Directions for the Board to follow in the near and long-term, as well as an Action Plan for implementing each of the Strategic Directions.

Modifications were approved and adopted by the Board on June 13, 2018 to reflect changes to staffing levels, Larkspur's departure from the MTA, interest in broadband and internet and the strategic focus of the MTA.

Mission

The MTA's prior Mission was to be "the key policy-making and coordinating body related to telecommunications matters in Marin." A further descriptive was added to the Mission which indicated "this is in line with the core values that have defined the MTA throughout its history of promoting availability, accessibility, affordability and public inclusion in the advancement and enhancement of telecommunications infrastructure and services in Marin."

At its January 23, 2016 workshop, the Board determined that its Mission, as evidenced by its authority as an organization, and its responsibility to its member jurisdictions and the Marin community at large, was more in line with the descriptive concerning its core values.

Accordingly, the Board determined that its updated and revised Mission statement is the following:

Support availability, accessibility, affordability and public inclusion in the advancement and enhancement of telecommunications infrastructure and services in Marin on behalf of MTA's members and the community.

Overall, the Mission works to specifically define the role of the MTA as a Joint Powers Agency (JPA) in Marin that touches on telecommunications in various areas and ways. Telecommunications is defined broadly in the context of the MTA's Mission, but focuses mainly on cable communications, video, Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) Access, broadband, and internet. In order to accomplish this prescribed Mission, the MTA will need to pursue the Strategic Directions incorporated in this Plan over time and within the funding levels approved by the Board.

The Strategic Directions Actions are delineated into Required Actions that can be done within MTA's current funding level, and Discretionary Actions that are outside of the MTA's current funding level. The board over time may choose to consider prioritizing certain Discretionary Actions and the respective resource requirements to fund them as a part of the funding level decisions considered each year, or on an ad hoc basis over time.

The actions identified within the Strategic Directions will benefit MTA's members as well as their constituents.

Key Assumptions for Implementing Strategic Directions

Successful pursuit of all of the Strategic Directions described below is based on the following key assumptions:

- a. The MTA will continue to have unity of support among the MTA's members. The MTA's core strength is in the unity of its members. Together, through the MTA, members are able to meet objectives, attain goals, and achieve efficiencies and capabilities that they could not if attempting to act on their own.
- b. The MTA will continue to maintain and develop expertise to function effectively in coordination, policy guidance, advocacy, oversight, franchise administration and outreach activities related to a wide variety of telecommunications matters within Marin on behalf of its members and the community.
- c. The MTA will devote the appropriate resources to accomplish the tasks under each of the Strategic Directions pursued, according to the resource level approved by the Board.
- d. The MTA will determine tangible means for identifying and measuring the Agency's success in regard to the Strategic Directions.

- e. **Time Line for Required Actions** - The MTA will continue to follow the Strategic Directions in 2018/19, evaluate its efforts in 2019, and continue to plan and budget accordingly for these efforts until the Strategic Plan may be further revised in the future.

Four (4) Strategic Directions for the MTA

1. **Continue to Perform Cable Franchise Administration, including, but not limited to, Provider Revenue Audits and Customer Service Assistance, and Other Administrative Functions.**
 - a. **Required Actions**– In order to follow this strategic direction, the MTA will continue to take, or implement, the following actions:
 - Perform overall video franchise administration functions, including managing the agency, board, financial and video franchise operations and the Dedicated Access Provider Agreement and the MTA-Larkspur Agreement; handling member, board and public inquiries; and managing projects and issues.
 - Monitor franchise and PEG fee revenue receipts and perform Franchise Fee and PEG Fee Revenue audits to ensure that the MTA's members receive the revenue that they are entitled to under local, State and Federal enablements; renew franchise PEG Fee ordinances prior to the State Video Franchise expiration dates; Franchise and PEG Fee verification and distribution to MTA members and CCMC.
 - Provide Customer service assistance, including handling consumer inquiries and complaints, interfacing with cable operators on behalf of MTA and community members, and performing other cable franchise administration activities as allowable under DIVCA, and State and Federal laws and regulations.

2. Support and Oversee Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) Access.

- a. **Required Actions**— In order to follow this strategic direction, the MTA will need to continue to take, or implement, the following actions:
- Oversee the use of all PEG Access resources, facilitated by the MTA and its members, to ensure the best possible, most cost-effective and efficient use by all members of the Marin community.
 - Continue to monitor, administer and enforce a Designated Access Provider (DAP) Agreement and revise it as needed in future DAP renewals, to ensure consistency with the MTA members' and Marin community's goals and objectives concerning PEG Access.
 - Ensure that Public/Community access to the development and provision of video and other content, is provided through the Dedicated Access Provider (DAP) and the Media Center, and is maintained and expanded in the future as resources allow.
 - Ensure that the MTA's members have an outlet for outreach to the community through Government Access services, provided through the DAP, the Media Center and remote programming origination from member locations.
 - Ensure that through the DAP and the Media Center current Educational Access programming and access to content development and distribution services by educational entities in Marin is maintained and expanded as resources allow.
 - Ensure through the DAP that members of the Marin community that are not cable television consumers have access to PEG Access programming and content through online distribution.

3. Provide Coordination, Policy Guidance and Advocacy Related to Telecommunications on Behalf of MTA's Members and the Community.

- a. **Required Actions**— In order to follow this strategic direction, the MTA will need to continue to take or implement the following actions to the maximum extent feasible within MTA's available staff and funding levels:
- Concerning matters related to telecommunications, the MTA will continue to provide policy guidance to its member jurisdictions. Composed of elected officials, the MTA Board is well versed in policy-making, development and implementation. This is the strength of the MTA and it will be leveraged for its members.
 - Advocate at the State and Federal level policies and changes (or opposition to changes) in law and regulation that would be beneficial to the MTA's members and community at large.
 - Provide coordination between and among its members related to telecommunications matters that impact or affect them. This may include providing model ordinances and other uniform response guidance to MTA's members to address common, efficient and effective approaches to telecommunications matters.
 - Provide updates to members on developing telecommunications law and regulation that impact local jurisdictions to facilitate member awareness and compliance. Using available resources such as membership in NATOA and SCANNATOA, the MTA will obtain, consolidate and disseminate information related to State and Federal telecommunications law and regulation that is pertinent to MTA members concerning their operations, activities, business functions and provision of services to residents. The MTA will note telecommunications related issues that require member compliance, including the potential impact, nature and timing of the potential compliance issue.
 - Vet issues for its members by taking advantage of the MTA's telecommunications knowledge and expertise.

4. Support Broadband Infrastructure Expansion, Services, Affordability and Accessibility.

- a. **Required Actions-** In order to follow this Strategic Direction, the MTA will need to continue to take, or implement, the following actions:

Work with MIDAS staff as necessary to insure MIDAS infrastructure and services are available for both member jurisdictions and their communities. MIDAS (Marin Information Data Access System) is the countywide secure private data/video network that is the infrastructure that supports government and other video cablecasts over the MTA PEG channels.

- b. **Discretionary Actions** – Directed by the Board as resources allow, and based on the critical nature and timing of the actions needed, the MTA may consider the following supporting actions:
- Assist with identifying Broadband development funding, such as grants, funding from other agencies that are project partners and other non-traditional sources of funding, in conjunction with community partners, consortia and other pertinent parties in order to help facilitate expansion of Broadband infrastructure and services in Marin.
 - Work with service providers and community partners to support broadband and internet accessibility (including low-cost access for underserved communities) and to foster competition for both infrastructure and services.

Key Potential Challenges to Implementing the Strategic Directions

Challenges can arise during the pursuit of the Strategic Directions discussed herein. The key challenges that the MTA will need to be continually mindful of and act to avoid or counteract through leveraging its strengths are:

- a. Potential inability to provide appropriate funding resources and staff as part of the Board budget approval process to facilitate the desired level of achievement of actions within each of the Strategic Directions.
- b. Potential detrimental changes in Federal and State laws and regulations.
- c. Potential changes in the MTA members' level of support for the stipulated Strategic Directions.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The Revised and Updated Strategic Plan as laid out herein is achievable given appropriate resource commitments as approved by the Board, and would continue to enable the MTA to have a positive impact on telecommunications development, access and use within Marin. The MTA will continue to follow the Strategic Directions in 2018/19, evaluate its efforts in 2019, and continue to plan and budget accordingly for these efforts until the Strategic Plan may be further revised in the future.