

# The San Antonio Area Broadband Network (SAABN)

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*A proposal to build a collaborative effort between the City and other governmental entities to expand fiber capability in San Antonio.*

The San Antonio Area Broadband Network (SAABN) aims to leverage the City's existing fiber communications infrastructure to develop a citywide multi-agency broadband network. The proposed project, SAABN, would be a collaborative project focused on creating an internal intra-governmental network to stimulate and expand the City's educational, informational, technological and economic development resources. The proposed intra-agency broadband network will allow participating governmental entities to exchange information with each other faster and more efficiently, increase broadband capabilities to each agencies' internal and external constituents, establish a platform for new broadband applications for the delivery of services to the public, and reduce the cost of broadband connectivity. Participation in SAABN will also open opportunities for COSA to develop innovative projects with other network partners.

To accomplish this objective, SAABN will leverage an existing information super-highway currently owned by the City of San Antonio (COSA) and CPS Energy. COSA owns the components of network's infrastructure, while CPS owns the fiber strands, excluding the last-mile fiber extension (which connects different entities to the network). Over the years, COSA and CPS Energy have made a substantial investment in developing this fiber network. By increasing participation in the network, SAABN will lower the cost of network operation, maintenance and reach.

SAABN participants would be limited to governmental entities with valid public purposes. As entities join SAABN, they would be required to support the costs of connecting to the network, as well as to the network's operations and maintenance. By connecting more sites to the network, SAABN promises to boost the capability of San Antonio public entities during the transaction of daily business, as well as during emergencies.

Universities and other potential governmental entities that join SAABN will receive tremendous technological and other benefits from their participation. COSA and CPS Energy would bring great value to the community through this endeavor, but there is also a strategic need to carefully evaluate the return on investment that other governmental entities will have through their participation in SAABN. These entities will be expected to pay for the full cost of connectivity (fiber extension) and share in network maintenance and operating cost, which are expected to increase with additional network participants.

The proposed SAABN network will not provide any services to the general public, which would require a certificate of authority. Under section 54.202 of the Public Utility Regulatory Act, municipalities are specifically forbidden from the public sale of “a service for which a certificate of convenience and necessity, a certificate of operating authority, or a service provider certificate of operating authority is required;” or “a non-switched telecommunications service used to connect a customer’s premises” to another customer or a long distance provider.

Because the proposed SAABN project will not result in the sale of any telecommunications services to the public, the project is authorized by state law. According to a Memorandum of Understanding between the City and CPS Energy, any connections made to the network must be made for City or CPS Energy business-related reasons. Therefore, additions to the SAABN network require the approval of a joint Operations Committee prior to deployment.

Given the lack of any legal or regulatory hurdles, the City of San Antonio and CPS Energy have an opportunity to leverage their fiber network to benefit other governmental entities in the community. The next step in implementing the SAABN project entails technical and financial discussions with interested governmental entities. The advantages of building SAABN include the significant expansion of the City’s educational, technological, informational, and economic opportunities by enhancing the broadband connectivity of the major institutional agencies that serve the citizens of our community.