CenturyLink VATI 2020 ABBA Projects FAQ

The Albemarle Broadband Authority is working with CenturyLink to update these Frequently Asked Questions about the fiber broadband projects underway in Albemarle County and funded by the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors appropriations, Commonwealth of Virginia funding through the Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI), and CenturyLink. These answers are not a commitment of work to be completed by the Albemarle Broadband Authority or the County of Albemarle. Current and future CenturyLink customers are encouraged to contact CenturyLink for more information. The resulting service offerings and contracts are strictly between the customer and CenturyLink.

1. Q: How many distinct broadband projects is CenturyLink working due to VATI and ABBA funds?
   A: 8

1a. Q: Does this number include the projects proposed for funding?
   A: No. There are 11 additional projects proposed for funding. This is the FAQ for the VATI 2020 projects. We’ve submitted 11 more project areas for VATI 2021 funding. Please contact Mike Culp via email (mculp@albemarle.org) or phone (434) 296-5891 to learn more about VATI 2021 funding and the proposed projects.

2. Q: How many homes/businesses to be offered service in total?

3. Q: Will all projects start and finish at the same time?
   A: No, different start and finish times depending on terrain and other complexities. As of May 10, 2020 all projects must be providing service by mid-March 2021. Some will offer service sooner.

4. Q: How can I keep track of when I might be offered service at my home?
   A: Keep an eye on this web page and as we receive updates per project we will provide an update.
5. Q: Is my address included?
A: The best way to answer this is look through the project maps linked here. If you don’t see your address, email or call Mike Culp and he will get back to you with an answer.

Email: mculp@albemarle.org  Phone: (434) 296-5891

6. Q: My home seems to be included in the maps, however the length of my driveway is significant, how can I find out if CenturyLink will charge me more because of it?

A: Up to ~650’ of fiber is covered at no cost. The 650’ is measured from the side of your house to the closest fiber terminal. Final engineering will determine the locations beyond a typical no cost install.

7. Q: What is the average construction cost per foot, if my connection ends up being beyond 650 ft. from the nearest fiber terminal?

A: You can expect to pay on average $1.55 per foot for your planning purposes. This is just an average, and a personalized quote would be provided if charges apply after service is ordered.

8. Q: We have multiple families interested on a private road. Is there a way we can express our interest in combining the construction work to offset costs?

A: Yes, please get your group together with addresses, email the names and addresses to mculp@albemarle.org and a map will be created of the addresses and emailed to CenturyLink for planning purposes.

9. Q: I have an empty or partially “build ready” lot on which I plan to build. How do I proceed with making certain a “drop” is available for the lot?

A: Please send the address or parcel number with a description of your plans to mculp@albemarle.org and verification will be provided that the lot is included in the project plan. CenturyLink is designing and building the network to accommodate additional homes and businesses that have not been built.

10. Q: What will be the depth of the “plowed in” fiber lines?
A: Fiber drops going to your home or business are about 18 inches deep.

11. Q: How is the on-premise equipment for my connection powered?
A: The equipment you will receive is all powered by a normal household 110v power outlet and as an inside placement.

12. Q: How do I order service when service isn't available yet?
A: Orders can be placed using the CenturyLink phone numbers listed on this webpage or by completing the online order form provided as the construction phase nears completion. Keep an eye of these FAQs for more information. CenturyLink is also working on a “pre-order” process that could allow for orders to be placed 45 days in advance; please keep an eye on this page for updates.
13. Q: What are the details of the current speed offerings, will they be metered like my satellite connection?

A: None of the CenturyLink speed offerings are metered. Details on current offerings can be found on this webpage.

14. Q: Will different sections of the project area be activated before others?
A: The answer depends on which project area you are in. Some project areas will be activated in phases; others will be activated “all at once”. Keep an eye on these FAQs as we near activation phase.

15. Q: When will we know the locations of the fiber terminals?
A: CenturyLink is working on construction plans, but final placement will not be known until construction is under way.

**Voice (Telephone) Services FAQs.**

16. Q: Will voice services be improved?
A: Customers signing up for CenturyLink Fiber Optic Internet can also order traditional voice services (not VoIP) over the same advanced fiber technology.

17. Q: Will VOIP be an option and available during a power outage as our landline is today?
A: Phone service will not be available during a power outage unless the customer purchases a battery backup unit from CenturyLink, or furnishes their own battery backup or alternate power source during a power outage. Additional details can be found at: https://www.centurylink.com/home/help/home-phone/digital-home-phone/battery-backup-units.html

18. Q: Can I keep my mylandline and use the Fiber for internet only?
A: If customers choose to purchase higher speed internet access, we will transition both voice and Internet to the CenturyLink Fiber Optic Internet connection.

19. Q: If I want to keep my DSL and landline service will I need to change anything?
A: At this time current customers can remain on their current plan. If this were to change in the future CenturyLink will communicate directly with impacted customers.

20. Q: I don’t have reliable cell coverage at my location, will this project improve cell coverage?
A: Cell coverage will not be impacted by this project, but you could have improved service through your home wireless network utilizing the fiber connection. If your cellular service provider offers a service typically called “Wi-Fi calling”; you may be able to set this up at no or some additional cost. Please contact your cell service provider for more information.

21. Q: We’ve heard that part of our current voice issues are related to old equipment “further down the line.” Will the old equipment used to handle voice calls still be used?

A: Most issues related to voice service are due to issues that arise over the copper network. If you move your voice service to your fiber connection it bypasses those copper cables to get back to CenturyLink’s voice network.

22. Q: Will our current CenturyLink provided phone numbers stay the same?
A: Yes, you will keep your current CenturyLink phone number when you switch to fiber.

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By: Mike Culp