



MARATHON COUNTY
BROADBAND TASK FORCE MEETING
Agenda

Date & Time of Meeting: **Monday, February 27, 2023, at 3:00 P.M.**

Meeting Location: **Assembly Room, Marathon County Courthouse, 500 Forest St, Wausau, WI**

Task Force Members: Chair John Robinson, Jacob Langenhahn, Gary Gisselman, Mike Ritter, Jennifer Aarrestad, Tony Sherfinski, Eric Budleski, Milton Olson, Wade Carroll, Kurt Schoenroch, Jon Euting

Task Force Purpose: *Develop recommendations identifying the potential role of Marathon County in facilitating the expansion of Broadband access in Marathon County. Review the Report: Broadband for Marathon County Broadband Assessment and Plan prepared by Design Nine and develop broad policies and partnership recommendations relating to the expansion of broadband/internet services throughout Marathon County.*

Phone #: 1-415-655-0001

Access Code: 120 112 4516

When you enter the telephone conference, **PLEASE PUT YOUR PHONE ON MUTE!**

1. **Call Meeting to Order**
2. **Public Comments (15 Minute limit)**
3. **Approval of the January 23, 2023, minutes**
4. **Educational Presentations and Committee Discussion:**
 - A. Update on Grant Funded Broadband Projects
 1. Frontier (PSC 2022)
 2. Bug Tussel (PSC 2022)
 3. Charter (RDOF)
 - B. Status Report on Bug Tussel's Project
 - C. FCC Fabric Map Challenges
 - D. Frontier 2023 PSC Applications
5. **Policy Discussion and Possible Action:**
 - A. Approach to Funding Sources: County, State, and Federal
 1. Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program
 2. American Rescue Plan Act
 3. Governor's 2023-25 Budget – Broadband Policy and Funding
 - B. Process for determining priorities for future broadband expansion efforts
6. **Next Steps**
7. **Next Meeting Date – March 27, 2023**
8. **Adjournment**

"Any person planning to attend this meeting who needs some type of special accommodation in order to participate should call the County Clerk's Office at 715-261-1500 or e-mail countyclerk@co.marathon.wi.us one business day before the meeting.

Emailed To: Wausau Daily Herald, City Pages, and Other Media Groups
Emailed By: T. Ranallo
Date/Time: 2/23/2023 at 12pm

SIGNED /s/ John Robinson _____
Presiding Officer or Designee

NOTICE POSTED AT COURTHOUSE

BY: T. Ranallo
DATE/TIME: 2/23/2023 at 12pm



MARATHON COUNTY BROADBAND TASK FORCE MEETING

Minutes

Monday, January 23, 2023, at 3:00 P.M.
Webex/Assembly Room, 500 Forest St, Wausau WI

Members	Present/Web-Phone	Absent
Chair John Robinson	x	
Jacob Langenhahn		x
Gary Gisselman	x	
Mike Ritter		x
Jennifer Aarestad	x	
Tony Sherfinski		x
Eric Budleski		x
Milton Olson		x
Wade Carroll	x	
Kurt Schoenrock	x	
Jon Euting		x

Also Present: Valerie Carrillo, Gerry Klein, Kristin Lambrecht

VIA Web or Phone: Jean Maszk, Kurt Gibbs, Bill Floyd, Alison Ellis, Scott Nyman, Todd Kruse

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Chair Robinson called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.
2. **Public Comments** (15 Minute limit) – None
3. **BROADBAND TASK FORCE MINUTES FROM DECEMBER TO BE APPROVED AT THE FEBRUARY MEETING.**
4. **Educational Presentations and Committee Discussion:**
 - A. Presentation on Telehealth – Wade Carrol – Shared a presentation on the Aspirus Telehealth Program. He gave an overview of how Aspirus video visits work. Aspirus uses Starlink business for some of their more outlying locations for internet service. They have issues with other ISPs and the bandwidth required for staff working remotely when on call at home.
 - B. Update on Grant Funded Broadband Projects
 1. Frontier (PSC 2022) – They were awarded their contract in December 2022. The County has pledged approximately \$944,000 which would serve approximately 10,600 units. They have two years to complete the project.
 2. Bug Tussel (PSC 2022) – Ashley noted there is a delay in construction of fiber due to work permit delays.
 3. Charter (RDOF) – There is a draft PowerPoint presentation in the pack that Chair Robinson is presenting to the county board. It includes the update for the project.
 - C. Status Report on Bug Tussel's Project – The reports will be turning to quarterly.
 - D. FCC Fabric Map Challenges – There is new mapping as of November. The feedback is set up for individuals to challenge the service provided. Gerry is working on getting the licenses to do a bulk challenge however it has been very cumbersome. The challenge website is not user friendly. There has been a request from the county to delay the initial application of the map as it will be used to allocate \$42.5 billion on the federal level.
5. **Policy Discussion and Possible Action:**
 - A. Approach to Funding Sources: County, State and Federal
 1. PSC Grant - \$14 million available for the next round of grants. There is information in the packets.
 2. Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program – \$42.5 billion available over the next 5 years. The state is in the planning process on how to distribute it. There is more information in the packet.

3. American Rescue Plan Act – The county has marked over \$3 million for broadband expansion. This money cannot be used as a loan to Bug Tussel. There is a potential to reallocate the funds.
4. Affordable Connectivity Program – Federal Communications Commission (fcc.gov) – Providers are offering subsidies to individuals in need to make internet more affordable.
- B. Process for determining priorities for future broadband expansion efforts – There is a need to identify gaps in service. Gaps could include population, geology, topography.

6. **Next Meeting Topics**

1. Rural school district broadband presentation

7. **Next Meeting:** February 27, 2023

8. **Adjournment – No motion due to lack of quorum. Meeting ended at 4:20pm.**

Respectfully Submitted by,
Kathy Johnson

[EXTERNAL] RE: Frontier Grant Application

?

• John Robinson
Tue 2/21/2023 7:55 AM

John,

These are the short descriptions of the project narratives for the two applications.

Marathon-Wausau Project

Frontier proposes to deploy a “future-proof” Fiber-to-the-Premises (“FTTP”) network that will initially offer symmetrical 5 Gbps broadband service to 117 grant-eligible underserved homes and businesses in the Wausau Easton and Weston areas in Marathon County. A key feature of this future proof network is that the technology supports higher speed tiers as capacity needs grow. In fact, Frontier is the first provider in the nation to introduce 5 Gbps symmetrical residential service throughout its entire fiber network, having also been the first to similarly launch 2 Gbps service in 2022.

The Project requires a capital investment of \$2,112,208.69 for the eligible locations. Frontier commits to cover 40% of the Project costs and is requesting grant support for the remaining 60%. Frontier’s funding request is limited to the identified grant-eligible Project locations. However, Frontier intends to integrate construction for these locations into its broader, self-financed expansion initiative—Building Gigabit America™—that will make symmetrical 5 Gbps fiber service available in adjacent areas. Accordingly, this Project would make high speed internet service available to more of the County.

Frontier’s Project not only brings the premier level of fiber connectivity available today to the community but also ensures that the community is prepared for future capacity needs and economic growth. Specifically, the Project installs readily scalable infrastructure capable of supporting symmetrical 10 Gbps (and higher). Moreover, future augmentation of capacity can be economically achieved through the addition and/or upgrade of system electronics (upgrade cards). Engineering, procurement, and installation of new electronics in the network and at the customer premises can be achieved without major construction or additional infrastructure deployment. Thus, the timing of future upgrades will be driven by customer demand and can be implemented on comparatively short timelines. In addition, Frontier’s deployment of ultra-high speed symmetrical FTTP broadband service will directly contribute to greater economic development for individuals and businesses utilizing fiber services, as well as for the broader community.

Marathon-Wausau-Schofield Project

Frontier proposes to deploy a “future-proof” Fiber-to-the-Premises (“FTTP”) network that will initially offer symmetrical 5 Gbps broadband service to 74 grant-eligible underserved homes and businesses primarily in the Villages of Weston and Kronenwetter and the Towns of Rib Mountain and Weston in Marathon County. A key feature of this future proof network is that the technology supports higher speed tiers as needs grow. In fact, Frontier is the

first provider in the nation to introduce 5 Gbps symmetrical residential service throughout its entire fiber network, having also been the first to similarly launch 2 Gbps service in 2022.

The Project requires a capital investment of \$540,382.21 for the eligible locations. Frontier commits to cover 49% of the Project costs and is requesting grant support for the remaining 51%. Frontier's funding request is limited to the identified grant-eligible Project locations. However, Frontier intends to integrate construction for these locations into its broader, self-financed expansion initiative—Building Gigabit America™—that will make symmetrical 5 Gbps fiber service available in adjacent areas. Accordingly, this Project would make high speed internet service available to more of the County.

Frontier's Project not only brings the premier level of fiber connectivity available today to the community but also ensures that the community is prepared for future capacity needs and economic growth. Specifically, the Project installs readily scalable infrastructure capable of supporting symmetrical 10 Gbps (and higher). Moreover, future augmentation of capacity can be economically achieved through the addition and/or upgrade of system electronics (upgrade cards). Engineering, procurement, and installation of new electronics in the network and at the customer premises can be achieved without major construction or additional infrastructure deployment. Thus, the timing of future upgrades will be driven by customer demand and can be implemented on comparatively short timelines. In addition, Frontier's deployment of ultra-high speed symmetrical FTTP broadband service will directly contribute to greater economic development for individuals and businesses utilizing fiber services, as well as for the broader community.



Thank you, again, for your support of these projects.

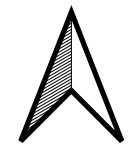
Jack



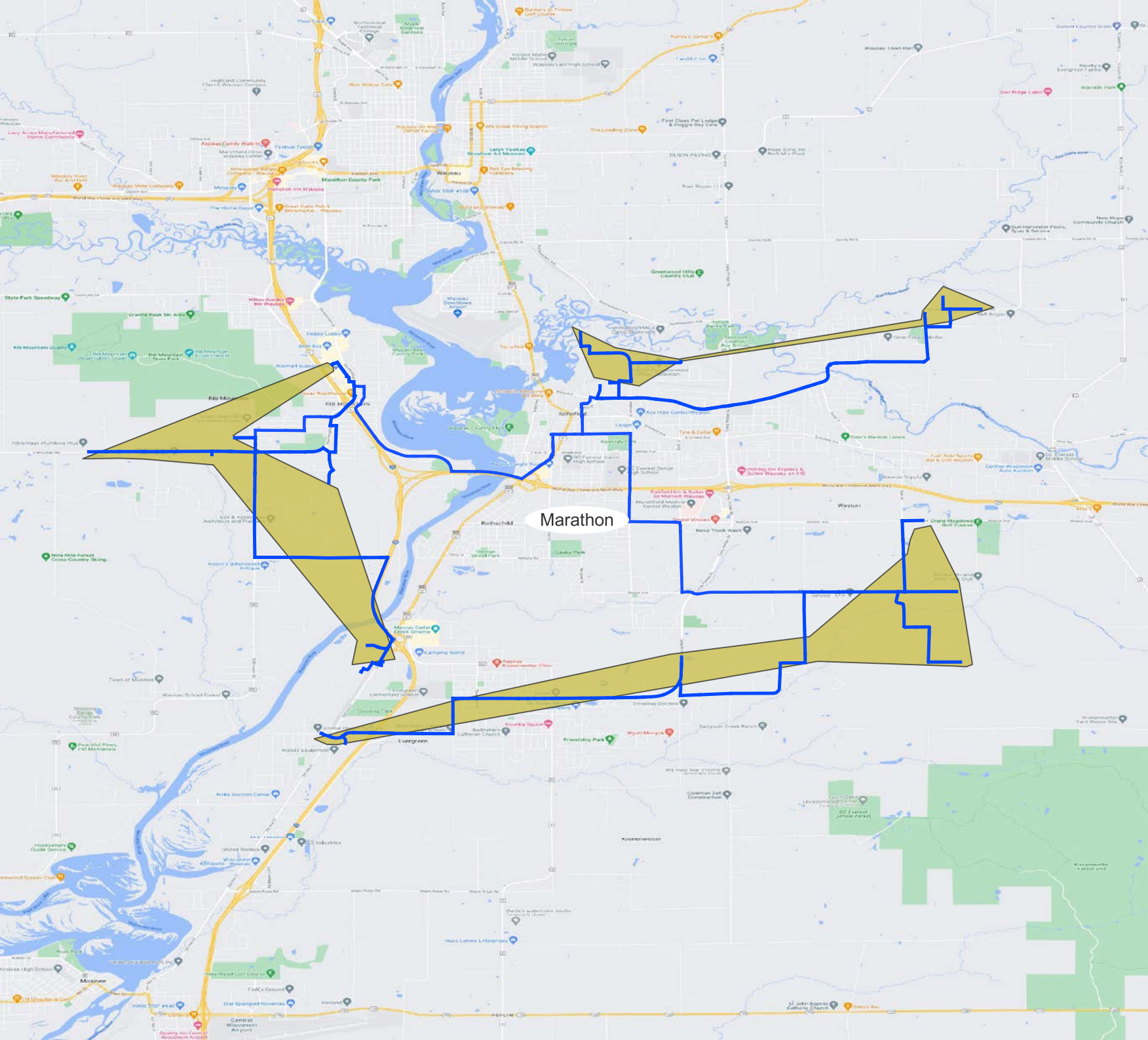
FRONTIER

Schofield Wisconsin Broadband Extension Grant

 FTR Coverage Area
 Fiber



0 1 2 mi



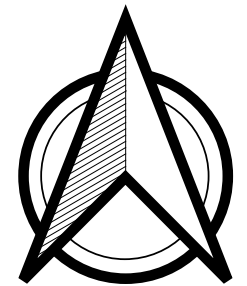


FRONTIER

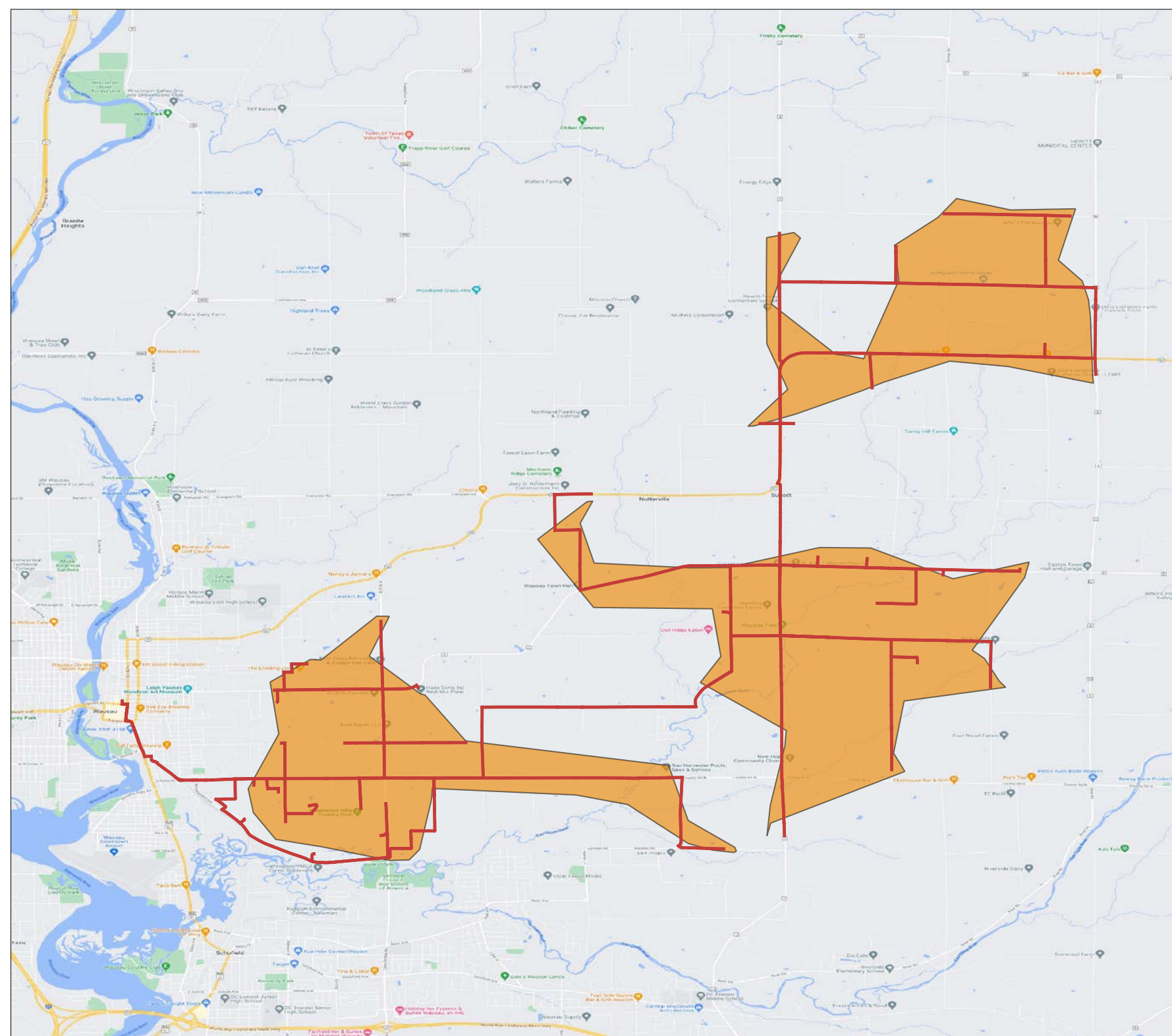
**WAUSAU,
WISCONSIN**

**BROADBAND
EXTENSION GRANT**

— Fiber Routes
— Coverage Areas



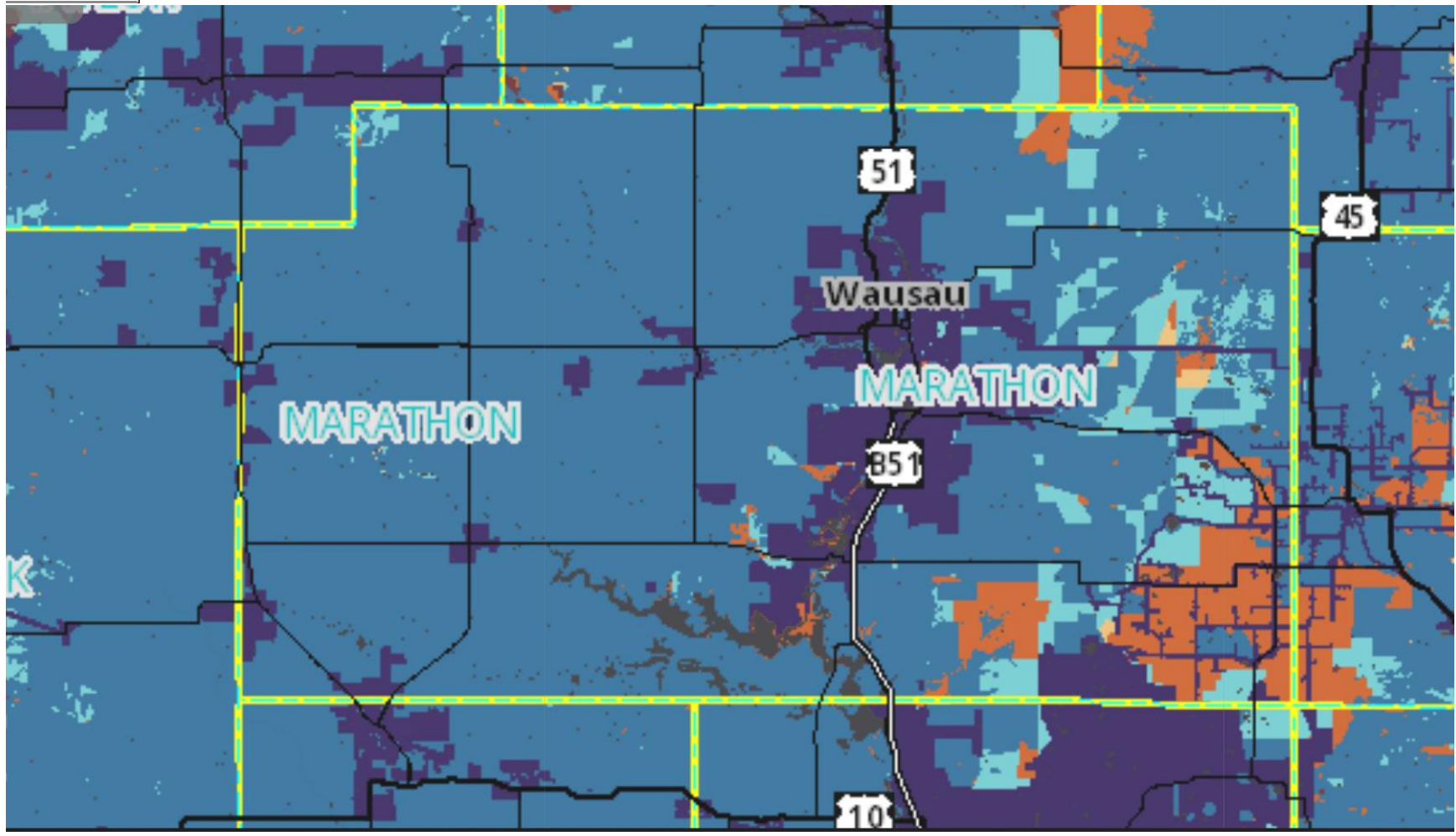
0 1 2 mi



Legend

Fixed Internet Speeds

- 100+ Mbps Down / 20+ Mbps Up
- 25+ Mbps Down / 3+ Mbps Up
- 10+ Mbps Down / 1+ Mbps Up
- 5+ Mbps Down / 0.6+ Mbps Up
- < 5 Mbps Down / < 0.6 Mbps Up
- No Known Internet Coverage



Section I: Overview

Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Local Planning Grants are available in the form of formula funding of \$1.5 million under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to Wisconsin counties and federally recognized Tribes to generate locally informed analysis of broadband needs and develop each community's vision for broadband development. The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (Commission) approved the allocation of this formula funding in docket 5-BP-2023 on February 1, 2023. Local planning activities may include a needs assessment, outreach and stakeholder engagement, and a strategy for broadband deployment. County and Tribal planning activities will inform Wisconsin's Five-Year Broadband Action Plan and future grant funding for broadband infrastructure projects across the state.

BEAD Local Planning Grants are not competitive grants but rather formula funding that will be allocated to each applicant that elects to participate in the program. Counties that elect to participate in the program may opt to (1) collaborate regionally through their respective [Regional Development organization \(REDO\)](#) or (2) participate independently. Tribes that elect to participate may opt to (1) collaborate regionally with a REDO, (2) collaborate with the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council, or (3) participate independently.

Funding will be distributed equally to all participating counties and Tribes, with those collaborating in groups receiving an additional 10 percent of the base allocation. Participation is not required, and the total grant allocation amount for each participating entity will be formulated following the submission deadline of this participation form. If a REDO or the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council coordinates on behalf of multiple counties or Tribes, it will receive and administer funding directly.

By completing this form, counties and Tribes are certifying their intent to participate in the program, including complying with related grant requirements. A subsequent grant agreement will delineate eligible costs for use of funding, applicable federal grant compliance requirements, and project deliverables. Each entity that opts in will be responsible to ensure compliance with applicable federal and state requirements related to this funding.

Following the Commission's Wisconsin Broadband Office's announcement of formula grant awards, those counties and Tribes that elected to participate individually and participating collaboratives will complete a brief application in the Commission's Online Grants System that describes planned activities and the intended use of funding among cost categories. Further details on completing the online application will be made available in forthcoming grant instructions available on the Commission website. The Wisconsin Broadband Office will inform participating REDOs, Tribes, and individual counties when the formula allocation has been processed and that the application is open in the online grants system, likely by March 13, 2023.

This BEAD Local Planning Grant Program Participation Form must be uploaded to the Commission's [Electronic Records Filing System \(ERF\)](#) by March 7, 2023, 1:30 P.M. For help uploading documents to ERF, see the [ERF user manual](#) or contact PSCStateBroadbandOffice@wisconsin.gov for assistance.

BEAD Local Planning Grant Program – Letter of Intent

Election to participate and receive formula funds



Section II: Election to Participate

Please select whether your county or Tribe elects to:

Participate in the BEAD Local Planning Grant Program collaboratively with a Regional Economic Development Organization (REDO)	
Specify REDO: _____	
Participate in the BEAD Local Planning Grant Program collaboratively with the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council	
Participate in the BEAD Local Planning Grant Program independently	
Not participate in the BEAD Local Planning Grant Program	

Section III: Primary Point of Contact

The primary point of contact will be the recipient of further communication from the Wisconsin Broadband Office regarding the BEAD Local Planning Program and need not be the authorized representative signing below.

1. Name	2. Position
3. Email	4. Phone

Section IV: Certification from Authorized Representative

Please sign below to declare your county or Tribe’s intent to participate in the BEAD Local Planning Program. The authorized representative could be a local elected official or executive of Tribal or county government and must be authorized under applicable laws to act on behalf of the entity related to receipt and administration of federal funding. By signing below, you are affirming and certifying that you are an authorized representative of your county or Tribe and are authorized to act on behalf of the county or Tribe related to this funding. If you have questions regarding whether as an authorized representative, you are authorized to act on behalf of the county or Tribe, please consult your legal counsel.

Signature below does not constitute an obligation of a county, Tribe, or its collaborating partners to comply with any terms or conditions of the grant program. For entities submitting this letter of intent, a grant agreement will be provided for review and signature.

1. Name	2. Position
3. Email	4. Phone
5. Signature	6. Date