



**MARATHON COUNTY
BROADBAND TASK FORCE MEETING
AGENDA**

Date & Time of Meeting: **Tuesday, May 28, 2024 at 3:00 P.M.**

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

Task Force Members: Chair John Robinson, Michael Ritter, Brandon Jensen, Jasper Hartinger, Randy Radtke, Jordan Reynolds, Jon Euting, Eric Budleski, Milton Olson, Valerie Carrillo

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 #: 1-408-418-9388

Access Code: 962 376 748

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 March 25, 2024 minutes**
4. **Educational Presentations and Committee Discussion:**
 - A. Introductions and Overview/History of Broadband Task Force
 - B. Update on Grant Funded/Assisted Broadband Projects
 1. Ongoing Grants Report
 2. Frontier
 3. Bug Tussel
 4. Charter RDOF
5. **Policy Discussion and Possible Action:**
 - A. Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program
 1. BEAD Overview and Timeline
 2. April 22nd meeting with Internet Service Providers
 3. Community Engagement in BEAD
 - a. Letters of support for specific ISP BEAD projects
 4. County Role in working with ISP
 - B. Bug Tussel
 1. 2022 PSC Grant Funding/Loan
 2. 2021 Supplemental Conduit Borrowing Request
 - C. PSC Capital Projects Digital Connectivity and Navigator Program
 1. United Way of Marathon County /United Way of Wisconsin
 - a. Request support from Marathon County
6. **Next Steps and Timelines**
7. **Next Meeting Date – June 24, 2024**
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.

SIGNED /s/ John Robinson _____
Presiding Officer or Designee

EMAILED TO: Wausau Daily Herald, City Pages, and other Media Groups

EMAILED BY: Toshia Ranallo

DATE & TIME: 5/23/2024 at 9:00 am

NOTICE POSTED AT COURTHOUSE _____

BY: _____

DATE & TIME: 5/23/2024



**MARATHON COUNTY
BROADBAND TASK FORCE MEETING
MINUTES**

**Monday, March 25, 2024 at 3:00 P.M.
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 Aarrestad	x	
Tony Sherfinski		x
Eric Budleski	x	
Milton Olson		x
Wade Carroll		x
Jon Euting		x

Also Present: Gerry Klein, Valerie Carrillo, Erin Andrews

VIA Web or Phone: Kevin O'Brien, Kurt Gibbs, Bill Flood, Mark Leonard, Chris Crawford, Alexander Johnson

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Chair Robinson called the meeting to order at 3:07pm.
2. **Public Comments** (15 Minute limit) – none
3. **RITTER MAKE A MOTION; SECOND BY GISSELMAN TO APPROVE THE February 26, 2024 BROADBAND TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES. MOTION CARRIED.**
4. **Educational Presentations and Committee Discussion:**
 - A. Marathon County Library Update: Alexander Johnson, Support Services Manager – They have a few different initiatives. They have external Wi-Fi antennas at 4 of 9 locations for citizens to use the Wi-Fi when the building is not open. They are part of a pilot program lending hotspots to members of the public, using federal grant funding.
 - B. Update on Grant Funded/Assisted Broadband Projects
 1. Ongoing Grants Report – There is an ongoing report in the packet.
 2. Frontier – Erin Andrews gave an overview of the submitted Frontier report. Discussion regarding the maps.
 3. Bug Tussel – Supervisor Robinson gave a brief overview of recent conversations with Bug Tussel.
 4. Charter – Chris Crawford gave updates with map overview of completions and progress.
 - C. PSC Capital Fund Projects (CPF) Grant Updates – Charter and Frontier applied for funding but did not receive any.
 - D. Wisconsin Digital Equity Plan – The plan was approved by the state. There is an executive summary of the approval in the packet.
 - E. Marathon County Website Broadband Page – Erin gave a visual overview of the upcoming website.
5. **Policy Discussion and Possible Action:**
 - A. Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program
 1. Updated Timeline
 2. FCC and PSC Map Challenges
 - B. Process and timelines for maximizing ISP participation –
6. **Next Steps and Timelines**
 - A. The Broadband Task Force is set to sunset in April. The County Board needs to adopt rules to continue. No meeting in April. John, Gerry, and Erin meeting with ISPs on April to discuss targeted areas relative to BEAD.
7. **Next Meeting:** TBD
8. **Adjournment: no motion due to lost quorum**



Boards & Committees

Task Forces

Minutes & Agendas

- Municipalities

Towns

Villages

Cities

BROADBAND TASK FORCE

Marathon County's overarching goal is to be the healthiest, safest, and most prosperous county in Wisconsin. Recognizing that access to broadband is an integral component of County health and prosperity, Marathon County established Goal 8.7: Strive to provide affordable, reliable, high-speed internet access throughout the County in the Strategic Plan 2018-2022.

Mission / 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 9 and develop broad policies and partnership recommendations relating to the expansion of broadband / internet services throughout Marathon County.

Membership: The task force shall be comprised of 9 members, 4 members of the Marathon County Board including members from EEEDC and Infrastructure Committees; and 5 community members with interest and / or expertise in internet / broadband services. Member terms shall be concurrent with the County Board terms.

Duties and responsibilities: By April 1, 2024:

1. Review the report: Broadband for Marathon County Broadband Assessment and Plan, prepared by Design 9, and information received from Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and identify potential options for the County to pursue relating to expansion of broadband throughout the County.
2. Identify strategies, partners and potential funding sources that will support the expansion of broadband services to underserved areas.
3. Make recommendations to the County Board of the role of Marathon County relating to its role in facilitating the expansion of broadband services to the residents of Marathon County.
4. Establish policies for the allocation of resources to meet public safety and access needs for residents in the County.

Task Force Members:

- Supervisor John Robinson, Chair
- Supervisor Mike Ritter, Vice-Chair
- Supervisor Brandon Jensen
- Supervisor Jasper Hartinger
- Supervisor Randy Radtke
- Supervisor Jordan Reynolds
- Eric Budleski, Citizen Member
- Valerie Carrillo, Citizen Member
- Jon Euting, Citizen Member
- Milton Olson, Citizen Member

Expansion Efforts

Broadband Affordability

Expansion Efforts

Map of Speed Test Results

Resources & Information

Service Availability

Take the Speed Test

What Speeds Do I Need?

Font Size:    Share & Bookmark  Feedback  Print

Broadband in Marathon County

Marathon County is the largest county in the state of Wisconsin (1,545 square miles) and the 10th largest in population (137,958 according to 2022 US Census Bureau data).

According to 2023 federal data, Marathon County has approximately 15,000 addresses that have no or very slow internet access. 43% of Marathon County residents live in rural areas. Rural broadband presents a unique challenge, as the cost of running infrastructure to rural locations is high.

Marathon County has been working to expand internet access since 2009. We continue to work with county residents, community leaders, the state of Wisconsin and internet service providers to find ways to improve internet access in the County. Our goal is to ensure every address in Marathon County has access to reliable and affordable internet access.

We accomplish this by working with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in Marathon County to identify areas of need and coordinate the ISP efforts to seek federal and state funding to expand internet service to these areas.

Since 2014, the state of Wisconsin has provided 11 statewide broadband grant initiatives and the Federal Government has funded 2 grant initiatives – resulting in over \$300 million broadband investment in the state of Wisconsin: [PSC Broadband Grant Programs \(wi.gov\)](#).

It is an enormous and important initiative, somewhat comparable to early 20th century efforts to bring access to electricity to every address in the nation. And while these efforts take time, we are making progress. According to the Public Service Commission, there are 56,293 broadband serviceable locations in Marathon County. However, 14,116 addresses remain un- or underserved.

MARATHON COUNTY BROADBAND EXPANSION TIMELINE

- 2024 Coordinating with rural communities, internet service providers and the PSC to identify broadband needs and maximize funding opportunities.
- Launched [Broadband page](#) on Marathon County website.
- 2023 Began preparations for upcoming Broadband Equity, Access, & Deployment funding which will bring \$1.05 billion to the State of Wisconsin to reach unserved and underserved locations through PSC BEAD grants.
- Hired Broadband Coordinator to coordinate efforts for BEAD and ongoing broadband projects.
- Worked with Charter and Frontier to submit 5 PSC Grant applications for coverage in Western and North Central Marathon County. None of the grants were awarded funding.
- 2022 Broadband Task Force and County Board coordinated with ISPs (Cirrinity, Bug Tussel and Frontier) in submitting three applications to the PSC for Broadband Expansion Grants. Frontier and Bug Tussel were awarded funding.
- 2021 Marathon County participated in a multi-county coalition partnering with Bug Tussel to obtain access to funding with a County guarantee. Bug Tussel's plan includes approximately 190 miles of fiber and 16 towers. Target completion at end of 2024.
- Charter and LTD advance in the application process under the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund through the FCC. Charter was selected and the project is ongoing target date of completion is 2025.
- \$250,000 of the County's Capital Improvement Program fund was designated in the 2021 budget for broadband expansion.
- Partnered with 4 ISP's on 5 Public Service Commission (PSC) grants. One grant was awarded to the Norrie and Pike Lake area.
- Partnered with Charter on a \$20 million NTIA Grant Application to serve the eastern portion of the county. The application was not selected.
- 2020 Broadband Task Force created.
- Met with Internet Service Providers.
- Broadband Assessment and Plan completed by Design Nine.
- 2018 Broadband Assessment and Plan conducted by Design Nine.
- 2015 Formed Broadband Connectivity Task Force.
- 2009 Conducted a Broadband Gap Analysis.

INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER (ISP)	Grant/Funding Program	Year Awarded	Goal of Completion	Approx # Served	Description	Status
Frontier	PSC Grant	2022	2024	10,000	Deploy fiber to the home network to 10,696 locations in 25 towns or Villages within Marathon County	Under review at PSC, Frontier revised the Grant to cover 6,328 addresses of which 1,642 are un/underserved. Pending decision from PSC.
Bug Tussel	Conduit Loan	2021	2024	1,800	Fiber run to approximately 1800 homes(see map in packet)	Project was expanded, then revised to cover 190 miles around MC, conduit run through some of area, no fiber connected to date
Bug Tussel	PSC Grant	2022	2024	600+	"LeatherCamp" project to connect approx 600 premises South of Kronenwetter/East of I39 (see map)	Not completed - goal to complete by end of 2024
Charter/Spectrum	RDOF -Rural Opportunity Development Fund	2022	2026		Fiber to regions W, NW and E of Wausau (see map in packet)	Ahead of schedule
TDS	E- ACAM - Enhanced Alternative Connect American Cost Model		2027		Upgrade DSL to existing customers, primarily in Mosinee and south central Marathon County	25% done by end of 2024, 50% by end of 2025, 75% by end of 2026, 100% by end of 2027
Cirrinity	E- ACAM - Enhanced Alternative Connect American Cost Model		2027		Provide Fiber to the home in SE Marathon County	

From: [Kruse, Todd](#)
To: [Erin Andrews](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] May 2024 monthly update for Frontier Communications
Date: Tuesday, May 21, 2024 11:00:43 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Monthly report for your May 22, 2024 deadline for ISP's:

Frontier's broadband expansion continues in Marathon County. Through May 14, 2024 we have opened for sale the following location counts for consumers to subscribe to fiber broadband service:

Total = 4,274 Customer Locations (CL's)

-

-

The 4,274 total count = 1,802 (grant) CL's + 2,472 (synergy) CL's

Todd Kruse

Fiber Partnerships Team , Business Development
todd.kruse@ftr.com | 6124235621 | Saint Paul, Minnesota



This communication is confidential. Frontier only sends and receives email on the basis of the terms set out at http://www.frontier.com/email_disclaimer.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN

FY 2022 Broadband Expansion Grants

5-BF-2022

ORDER FOR LIMITED REOPENING, NOTICE, AND REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

Comments Due: Thursday, June 6, 2024 – 1:30 p.m. CT	Address Comments To: Cru Stublely Secretary to the Commission Public Service Commission P.O. Box 7854 Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7854
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This is the Order authorizing a limited reopening of the Order in this docket pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 196.39 to consider changes as summarized below. This limited reopening is to provide notice of the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin’s (Commission) intent to modify the Order as to project scope and budget of the grant award approved for the Frontier North Inc. (Frontier) Clark, Lincoln, and Marathon Counties project, and to provide any interested persons an opportunity to comment on the proposed modifications. This limited reopening is exclusively for the project scope and budget associated with that grant award and no other grant award approved in that Order is impacted.

On July 28, 2022, the Commission issued an Order approving \$124,967,392 in Broadband Expansion Grants to 71 projects in the Commission’s tenth program round. ([PSC REF#: 444257](#).) The Broadband Expansion Grant program is authorized by Wis. Stat. § 196.504 and in this round, funded by the State of Wisconsin through Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). Among these projects, the Commission awarded \$4,293,662 to Frontier for its Clark, Lincoln, and

Docket 5-BF-2022

Marathon Counties project. (*Id.* at 29.) The Commission approved Frontier’s Clark, Lincoln, and Marathon Counties project based on the description provided in the application. (*Id.* at 26, stating: “Each grant award approved by this Order is for the specific project described in the grant application, at the stated project cost and in the project-area described by the project maps and other document in the grant application.”) Frontier’s application stated that the project would pass a total of 10,696 locations (812 business, 9,884 residential) including 10,044 unserved locations (755 business, 9,289 residential). ([PSC REF#: 432963.](#)) A grant agreement with Frontier, incorporating a project scope based on its application for the Clark, Lincoln, and Marathon Counties project, was executed on October 25, 2022.

Since the Order and execution of the grant agreement, Frontier has determined that its project will only serve 6,889 total locations, including only 1,642 unserved locations. ([PSC REF#: 493056](#), response to PSCW-AK-1.3.) Specifically, Frontier has determined that 3,220 of the total 10,696 locations identified in the application were counted in duplicate (*id.*); 175 of the total 10,696 locations identified in the application are now too expensive to serve (*id.*, response to PSCW-AK-1.4); and only 1,642 of the 10,044 unserved locations identified in the application are in fact unserved ([PSC REF#: 494490](#)). Frontier attributed the erroneous classification of the unserved locations to a misinterpretation of the location information provided by the consultant that was performing Frontier’s grant planning. ([PSC REF#: 494490.](#)) Frontier has indicated that it will make improvements and has moved these functions to an internal team to prevent future errors on grant applications. ([PSC REF#: 493056](#), response to PSCW-AK 1.3.)

Meanwhile, Frontier has also determined that overall project costs have increased from \$17,434,650 to \$40,153,408. Frontier attributes this overall change to the passage of time,

limitations of the former consultant’s planning model, the availability of material, and other factors. (*Id.*, response to PSCW-AK-1.2.)

Frontier has reported that construction for the project has not started, but estimates that the project was 20 percent complete based on project planning and development work that has occurred to date. ([PSC REF#: 499194](#).) Frontier requests that the Commission revise its grant agreement to correct the funded locations to 6,889 and reduce the grant amount by \$1,000,000. (*Id.*, response to PSCW-AK 1.5.) Frontier asks the Commission not to make a pro-rata reduction because it is willing to contribute \$23.7 million more than originally committed in matching funds, which would increase the total match percentage from 75 percent of total project costs in the original proposal to 92 percent in its revised request. A summary of these project changes is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Frontier’s Clark, Lincoln, and Marathon County Project Changes

Inputs	Initial	Revised	Change Number	Change %
Total locations	10,696	6,889	(3,807)	(35.6%)
Unserved locations	10,044	1,642	(8,402)	(83.6%)
Grant Request	\$4,293,662	\$3,293,662	(\$1,000,000)	(23%)
Total Budget	\$17,434,650	\$40,153,408	\$22,718,758	130.3%
Match Percent	75%	92%	17%	22.6%

Based on the information provided by Frontier, its request for scope modification appears reasonable and this draft order proposes to modify the Commission’s original Order to reflect the request. While the revised scope would reduce the number of locations served, the proposed reduction in grant funding and increase in match funding is responsive to the reduction in scope, and proceeding with the existing project would allow locations still within the scope to obtain broadband access in a more timely way than they could through separate projects yet to be

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initiated. However, the Commission requests additional evidence or comment that is relevant to this decision.

The Commission authorizes the limited reopening of this docket for the limited purpose of taking new evidence and public comment regarding the proposed project scope and budget changes. Comments are due no later than Thursday, June 6, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. CT. If no comments opposing the proposed modifications are received by the comment due date, the Secretary to the Commission is directed to sign on behalf of the Commission an Order on Reopening making the proposed changes. If comments opposing the proposed change are received, the Commission delegates authority to the Commissioner delegated for Broadband to issue a Final Decision on Reopening.

DOCUMENTS. All documents in this docket are filed on the Commission's Electronic Records Filing (ERF) system. To view these documents: (1) go to the Commission's website at <https://apps.psc.wi.gov>, (2) enter "5-BF-2022" in the box labeled "Quick Single Docket Search," and (3) select "Documents."

COMMENTS. The Commission requests comments on the above issues. Comments are due no later than Thursday, June 6, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. CT. Any broadband providers, local governments, or other interested organizations shall file comments using the Commission's Electronic Regulatory Filing (ERF) system.

Any members of the general public shall file comments either through the Commission's website or by mail as follows:

- **Web Comment.** Go to the Commission's website at <https://psc.wi.gov>, click on the "File a Comment" button. On the next page select the "File a Comment" link that appears for docket number 5-BF-2022.

Docket 5-BF-2022

- **Mail Comment.** All comments submitted by U.S. Mail shall include the phrase “Docket 5-BF-2022 Comments” in the heading, and shall be addressed to:

Docket 5-BF-2022 Comments
Public Service Commission
P.O. Box 7854
Madison, WI 53707-7854

The Commission will not accept comments submitted via e-mail or facsimile (fax).

Any material submitted to the Commission is a public record and may appear on the Commission website.

CONTACT. Please direct questions about this docket or requests for additional accommodations for the disabled to the Commission’s docket coordinator, Alyssa Kenney, at (608) 267-9138 or alyssa.kenney@wisconsin.gov.

Dated at Madison, Wisconsin, _____

For the Commission:

Cru Stublely
Secretary to the Commission

CS:JF:TK:AK:bs DL:02009594

MARATHON COUNTY

Work in Progress Report

Current Project Status

Bug Tussel has contracted with Michels Corporation to assist in the completion of the work that was left unfinished by our previous contractor. We are working to obtain local permits (Athens and Wausau) so that we can repair those areas that need to be addressed and begin work on the Leathercamp Project. With Michels on board and discussions regarding a revised design and funding, we believe that 2024 will be a very productive year.

KES had begun a performance audit of the work completed (or claimed to be completed) by our previous contractor. During this audit, we have determined that a portion of the work claimed to have been completed was not. This audit was occurring during the winter months. The audit work was suspended once a significant amount of snow was on the ground which prevented us from completing our work. With the advent of Michels being able to begin work, we will have Michels perform this work as it begins to complete those areas within the county that need completion. We are confident that we will be able to provide a clearer picture as we progress forward.

MAY 2024

Week Ending May 5

Crews: 4 Workers: 22

In Progress:

Proofing crew working through the WI-29 OLT, and is scheduled to move to Brokaw 5/13/24.

There are a couple of sections in Athens that are scheduled for repair.

Drill Crews are working east out of Mosinee along WI-153.

Plow Crew Scheduled. Moved all equipment to Mosinee and will start on 5/6/2024.

Action:

Michels to send out updated schedule for Marathon County.

Bug Tussel to provide Brokaw shapefiles.

Completed:

Proofing crew is Completely done in Athens OLT.

Drilling and Setting is complete in the city of Athens, and along CR-A.

RR Bore and Scrap Yard boring complete in Wausau.

Week Ending May 12

Crews: 4 Workers: 22

In Progress:

Proofing crews working through the WI-29 OLT and Brokaw OLT at the same time.

There are a couple of sections in Athens that are scheduled for repair.

Drill and Plow Crews are working east out of Mosinee along WI-153.

Plow Crew Scheduled. Moved all equipment to Mosinee and will start on 5/6/2024.

Action:

Bug Tussel to obtain Town of Maine Permits.

Completed:

Proofing crew is Completely done in Athens OLT.

Drilling and Setting is complete in the city of Athens, and along CR-A.

WI-153 is 100% Drilled out.

Action Item: Bug Tussel to obtain Town of Maine Permits 5/15/24

Week Ending May 19

Crews: 4 Workers: 22

In Progress:

Proofing crews working through the Hamburg and Brokaw OLT at the same time.

Plow Crews are working east out of Mosinee along WI-153.

Drill Crews are working on Pioneer rd, 16th rd, Oak Rd, Spring Rd, and Maple Ridge Rd.

Completed:

Proofing crew is Completely done in Athens OLT, and WI-29 OLT.

Drilling and Setting is complete in the city of Athens, and along CR-A. f. WI-153 is 100% Drilled out.

APRIL 2024

Week Ending April 14

In Progress:

Proofing crew working through the Athens OLT

Setting Crew is working east along County Rd A.

Drill Crew is headed to Leathercamp.

Completed:

Drilling and Setting is complete in the city of Athens.

RR Bore and Scrap Yard boring complete in Wausau.

Week Ending April 21

In Progress:

Proofing crew working through the Athens OLT

Setting Crew is following proofing crew up Pioneer rd towards Athens.

Drill Crews are working east out of Mosinee along WI-153.

Completed:

Drilling and Setting is complete in the city of Athens, and along CR-A.

RR Bore and Scrap Yard boring complete in Wausau.

Week Ending April 28

In Progress:

Proofing crew working through the WI-29 OLT.

Setting Crew is working through the town Athens swapping out HH's as necessary.

Drill Crews are working east out of Mosinee along WI-153.

Plow Crew Scheduled for Leathercamp/Mosinee East 5/6/24.

Action:

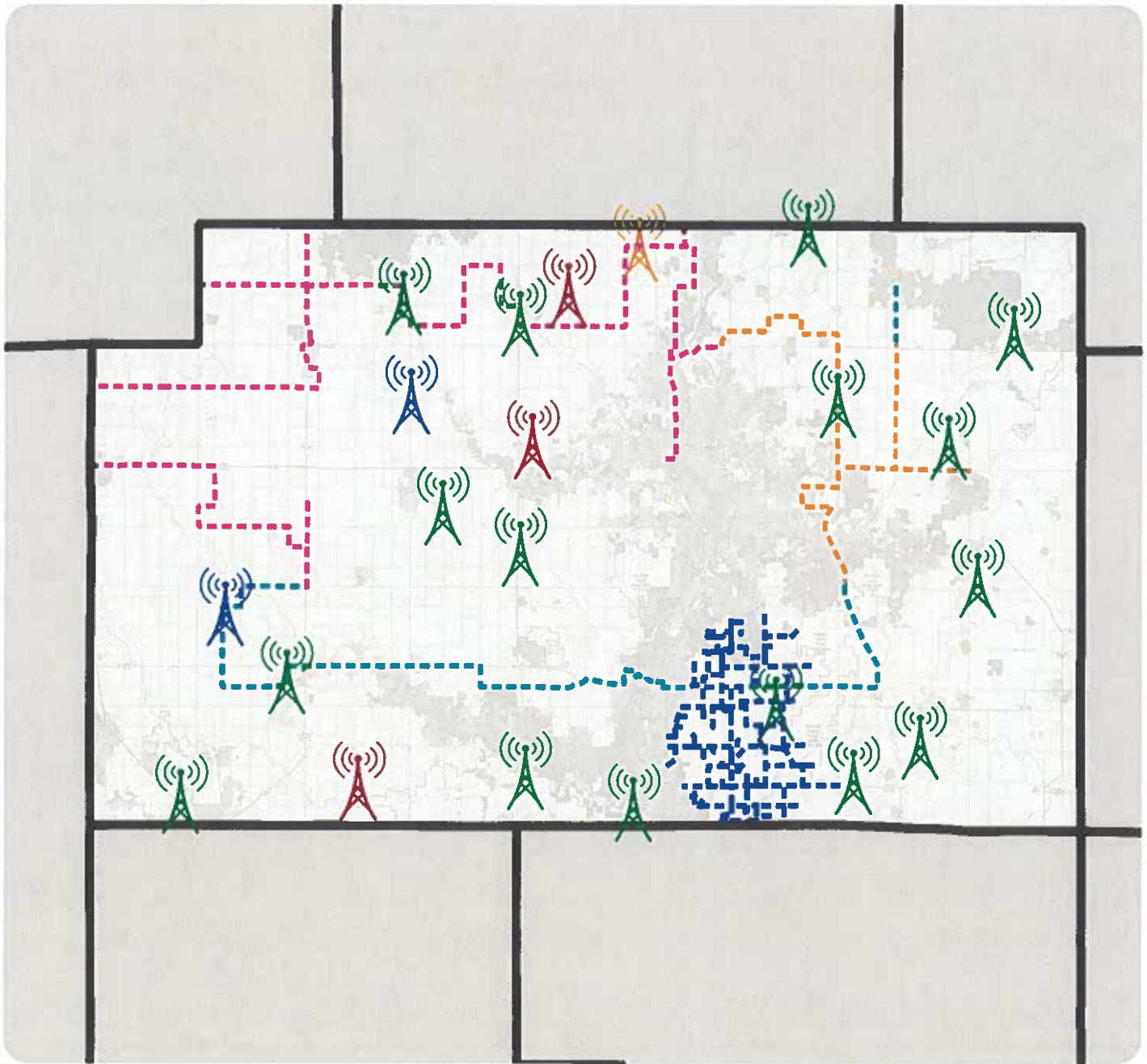
Bug Tussel to provide Shapefiles for WI-29 OLT

Completed:

Proofing crew is Completely done in Athens OLT.

Drilling and Setting is complete in the city of Athens, and along CR-A.

RR Bore and Scrap Yard boring complete in Wausau.



MAP KEY



Fixed Wireless

1. ACQUISITION

Scouting and lease agreement for site location are in progress.

2. APPROVALS

Permit submission and approvals are in progress.

3. CONSTRUCTION

Construction and equipment installation are in progress.

4. CONNECTIONS

Utility, power, and signal connections are in progress.

5. LIVE

[Get Internet Now!](#)



Fiber

1. DESIGN

Route design, planning, and engineering are in progress.

2. APPROVALS

Permit submission and approvals are in progress.

3. CONSTRUCTION

Conduit cable and utility construction are in progress.

4. FIBER

Fiber placement inside conduit is in progress.

5. CONNECTIONS

Fiber splicing and utility, power, and signal connections are in progress.

6. LIVE

[Get Internet Now!](#)

To: Marathon County Broadband Committee

From: Scott Feldt, Director of Public Affairs

RE: Marathon County Broadband Project

Date: December 18, 2023

Introduction

The Marathon County Broadband Project being performed by Bug Tussel Wireless ("BTW"), has been delayed due to a number of factors. While there has been a delay, Bug Tussel is committed to completing this county project and the Leathercamp project by the end of 2024.

Background

BTW and Marathon County entered into a partnership in 2021 via the issuance of \$25 million of bond funding through the Fond du Lac County Bond Program. The proposed project included the construction of 18 cellular towers and 198.33 miles of middle mile fiber at an estimated cost of approximately \$22.5 million. The Marathon County Board approved the Project in 2022 with a target completion year of 2024.

Following issuance of the project, the President of BTW, the Marathon County Broadband Committee Chairman, and the Marathon County IT Director visited various townships in the County to inform local governments of the Project and to gain any feedback and concerns the townships may have. These meetings included many requests by townships for fiber and/or towers to be located in their areas. As a result, the Project scope had increased from 18 towers to 24 towers and from 198.33 fiber miles to 452 fiber miles with no increase in funding.

Initial construction was kicked off as anticipated in 2021. However, it was quickly realized that rock was more prevalent in the county than originally estimated. This caused significant delays in construction as well as an increase in cost of approximately \$3.5 million in the areas the conduit network is currently installed. In parallel, the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the material market were significant, causing significant lead time increases and material costs over doubling from original estimates. The expansion of the project, the need for additional rock boring has led to funding challenges.

Current Project Status

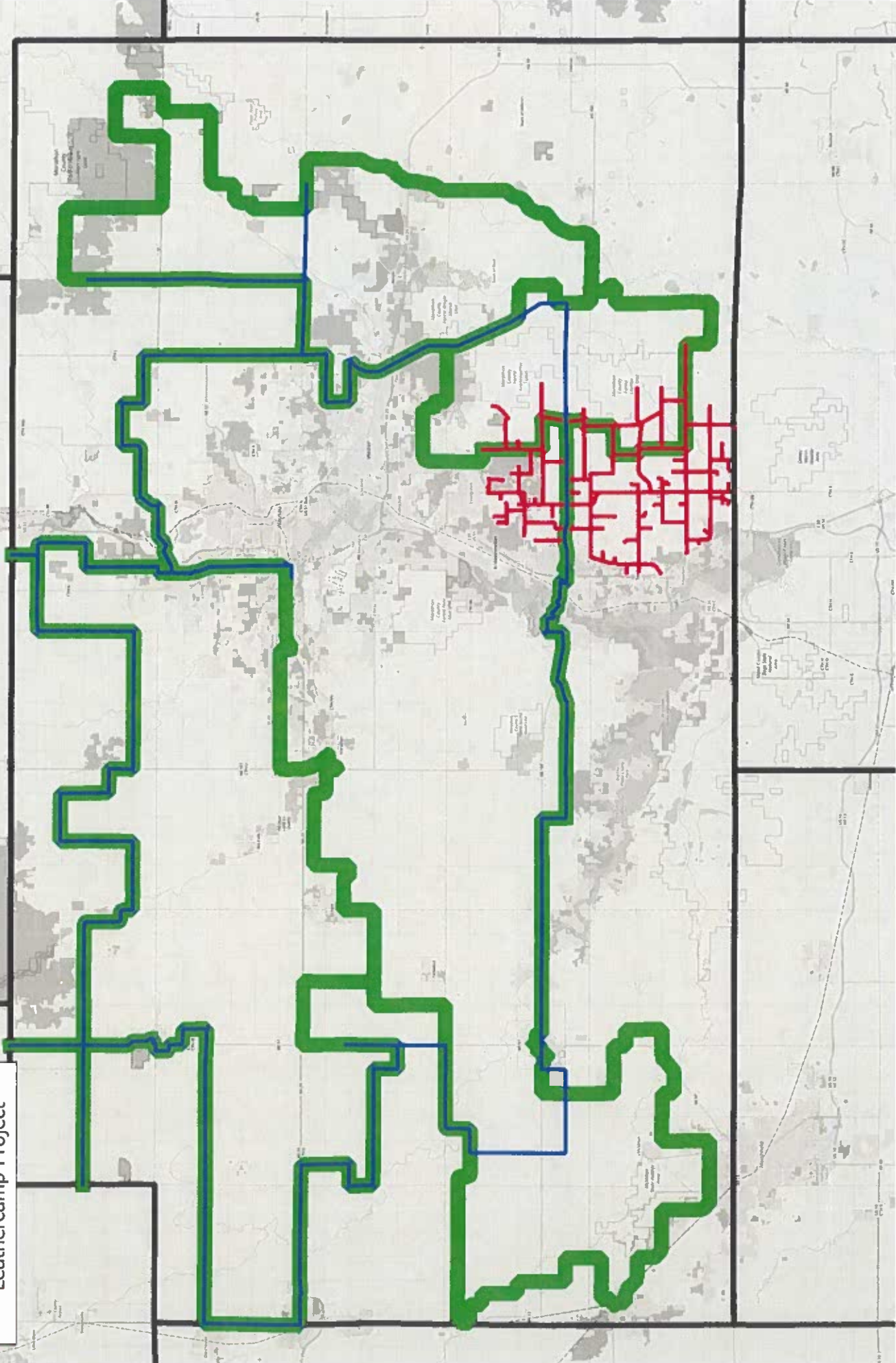
As of the date of this letter, 16 towers have been constructed and are live, and an additional 7 tower projects are in various stages of lease acquisition and permit approval. Over 182 miles of conduit have been installed. We are verifying that all work has been completed by our subcontractors. Still, the project, which has expanded from the original plan, cannot be completed under the original budget. Bug Tussel has been discussing options to modify the project and its corresponding budget. We understand that there may be concern regarding the completion of the project. Bug Tussel is committed to the Project's success in Marathon County. The setbacks encountered were unfortunate.

MARATHON COUNTY

Fiber Route - V3

Fiber Route - V2

Leathercamp Project





Questions? Email broadband@co.marathon.wi.us

Marathon County's Broadband Website: www.marathoncounty.gov/broadband

WHAT IS BROADBAND + WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Broadband refers to high-speed internet access. It is different than cell service and is vitally important for:

- Running businesses
- Education
- Daily activities like banking or online purchasing
- Entertainment
- Access to government services
- Access to medical care from home

BEAD is a unique funding opportunity to improve Broadband access in Marathon County



In Marathon County,

15,000+

addresses have no internet service (unserved) or slow, unreliable service (underserved).

WHAT IS BEAD?

- The Federal Government dispersing \$42.5 Billion across all 50 states & territories to expand Broadband access throughout the USA
- The State of Wisconsin is receiving \$1.05 billion to grant for broadband expansion through grants from the Wisconsin Public Service Commission (PSC)
- Grants will be awarded to Internet Service Providers to help fund expansion projects to high cost/rural areas
- BEAD funding will prioritize unserved or underserved areas
- BEAD projects must be completed by end 2030 (6 years or less)

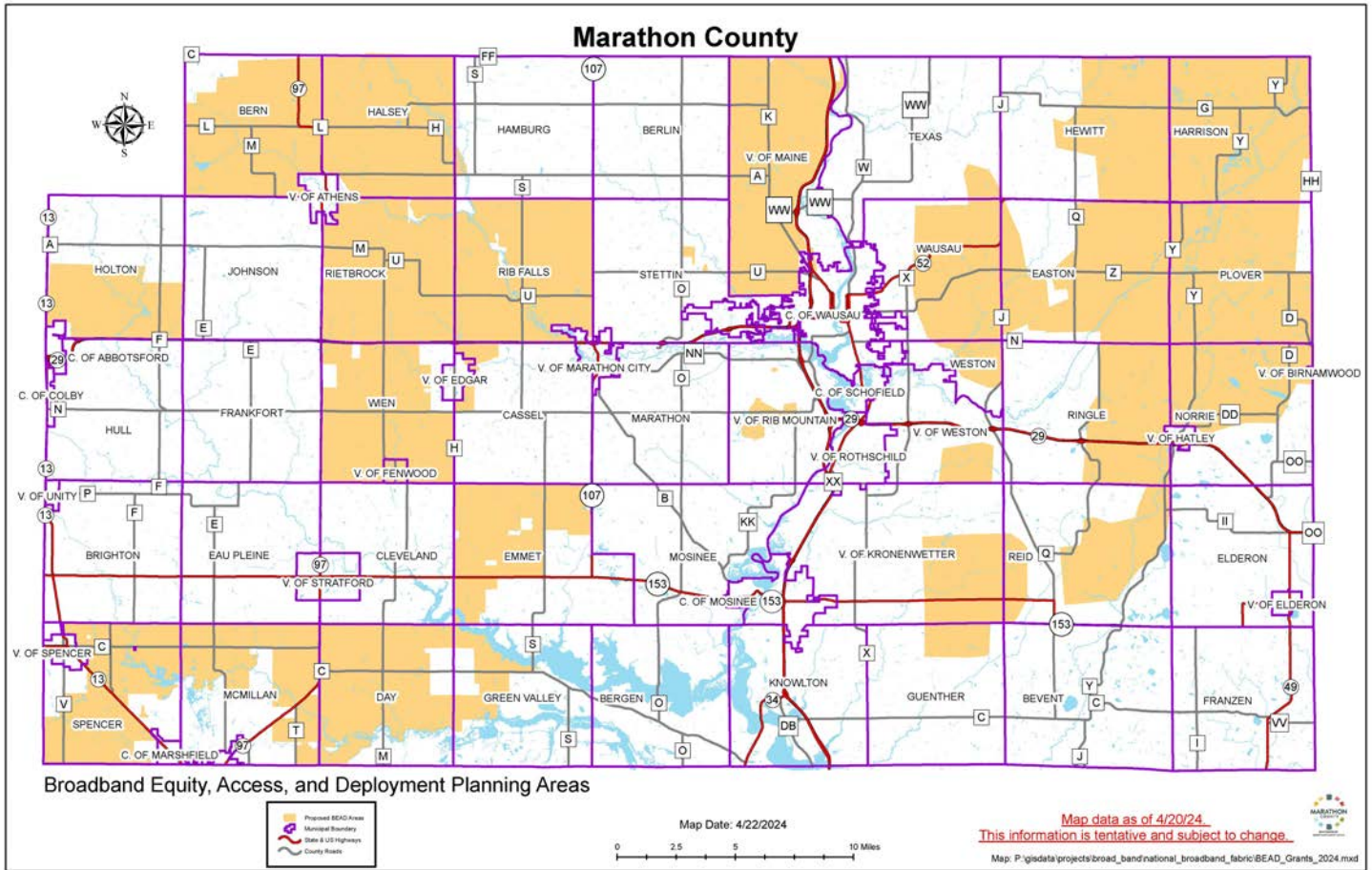


WHY IS BEAD IMPORTANT?

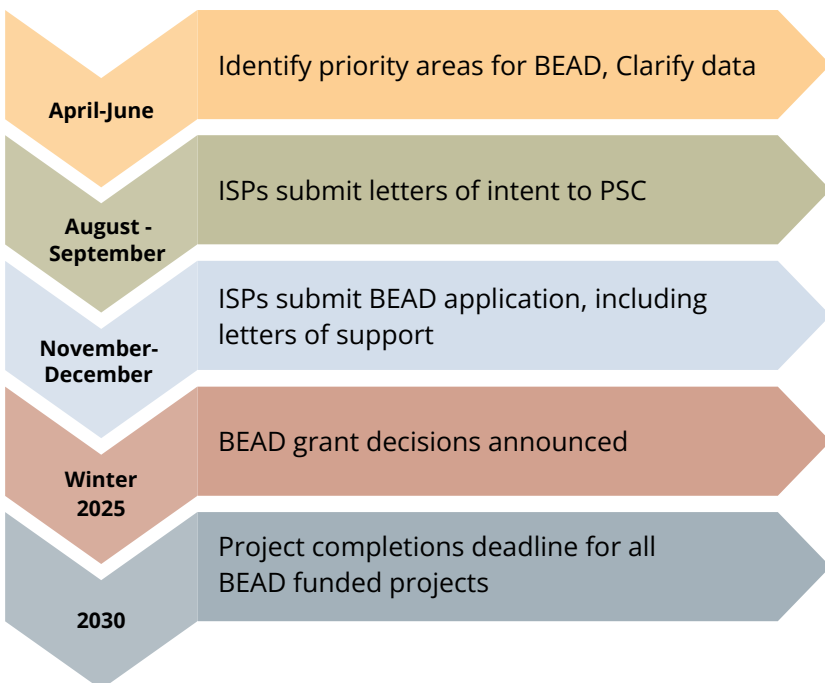
- Broadband access is necessary for work, education, public safety and healthcare
- BEAD is the best funding opportunity to make fast, reliable, and affordable internet access available to everyone in Marathon County
- Funding like BEAD will not be available for several years – we need to work together to maximize funding to Marathon County.

BEAD PRIORITY AREAS IN MARATHON COUNTY

The County is working with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to apply for BEAD grant funds to bring broadband internet to as many un/underserved addresses as possible.



BEAD TIMELINE (TENTATIVE DATES)



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

1. Visit our Broadband website.

Scan the QR code or visit marathoncounty.gov/broadband



2. Check your address on the FCC map.

- Request service to your address on FCC map for service
- Report errors on FCC Map to Marathon County's Broadband Coordinator: broadband@co.marathon.wi.us
- FCC Map Link: <https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/home>.



BEAD – Broadband Equity and Deployment

BEAD PROCESS	DATE
PSC Volume 1 submitted to NTIA	12/1/ 2023
PSC Volume 2 submitted to NTIA	12/27/2023
FCC Fabric Challenges	Ongoing
Vol 1 Approved by NTIA	April 11, 2024
PSC Vol 2 Approval	Pending- Funds must be committed within 365 days of Approval
Meeting with Marathon County ISPs to identify priority areas	April 22, 2024
PSC Challenge Period to confirm locations eligible for BEAD	April 29-May 29, 2024
PSC Challenge Rebuttal Period	June 6- July 6, 2024
PSC Final Determinations of Challenges	June 6-August 6, 2024
BEAD LOIs (Letters of Intent) and Review	August 6- TBA
BEAD Applications Due	TBA – (est October -November)
BEAD Awards Announced	TBA -Funds must be committed within 365 days of Vol 2 Approval
BEAD Grant Projects Completed	2030

Definitions:

BEAD – Broadband Equity and Deployment

PSC Submitted to NTIA:

Volume 1: Establishes the locations and Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs) eligible for BEAD funding and outlines the challenge process.

Volume 2: Details remaining requirement for initial proposals, including Letters of Intent (LOIs)

LOIs – Letters of Intent will be submitted by Internet Service Providers (ISPs) defining scope of project, including:

- Estimated number of locations applied for, the geographical area and proposed technology.
- Commitment to providing low-cost service option.
- Documentation of financial, managerial & operational capacity
- Documentation of other funding received or being pursued.

PSC Capital Projects Digital Connectivity and Navigators Program

Overview

The Commission will award up to \$33 million from the U.S. Department of Treasury under the Capital Projects Fund (CPF) Digital Connectivity and Navigators Program to deploy computing devices, install Wi-Fi equipment in targeted apartment buildings, and provide digital navigation services to make use of the devices for work, education, and health monitoring.

Who is eligible to apply

Non-profits and other eligible entities are eligible to apply for grants. The Commission sub-grant program will prioritize programs embedded within trusted organizations that have capacity and experience with reaching targeted populations.

Currently accepting applications	Yes Application deadline: June 19, 2024 at 1:30 PM CDT
Matching funds required	No
Docket Number	5-CPF-2024
Questions related to application process	PSCCapitalProjectsFund@wisconsin.gov