



MARATHON COUNTY BROADBAND TASK FORCE MEETING

Agenda

Date & Time of Meeting: **Monday, February 21, 2022, at 3:00 P.M. (Please note the start time)**

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

Task Force Members: Chair John Robinson, Eric Budleski, Sandi Cihlar, Sara Guild, Jacob Langenhahn, Milton Olson, and John Robinson, Wade Carroll, Kurt Schoenroch

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.*

The meeting site identified above will be open to the public. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health directives, Marathon County encourages Task Force members and the public to attend this meeting remotely. Instead of attendance in person, Task Force members and the public may attend this meeting by **telephone conference**. If Task Force members or members of the public cannot attend remotely, Marathon County requests that appropriate safety measures, including adequate social distancing, be utilized by all in-person attendees. Persons wishing to attend the meeting by phone may call into the **telephone conference beginning five (5) minutes prior to the start time indicated above using the following number. Please press # if prompted for an attendee code.**

Phone #: 1-408-418-9388

Access Code: 2496 952 1568

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 24, 2022 Broadband Task Force Meeting Minutes**
4. **Educational Presentations and Committee Discussion:**
 - A. Update on RDOF progress
 - B. Update on NTIA Grant Application
 - C. Discussion of Other Funding Opportunities
 - D. Update on ISP Initiatives
5. **Policy Discussion And Possible Action:**
 - A. Review and Recommend Partnerships for the Wisconsin PSC’s Broadband Access Grant
 1. Determine Criteria for evaluation of requests
 2. Determine role of Marathon County and expectations of other parties including local governments
 3. Identify steps to support the applications
 - B. Potential Legislative Changes that Could Expand Access to Internet Services
6. **Next Steps**
7. **Next Meeting: March 28, 2022**
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, CityPages, andNOTICE
Other Media Groups

POSTED

AT

COURTHOUSE_

Emailed By: T. Ranallo

BY: T. Ranallo

Date/Time: 8:00am 2/16/2022

DATE/TIME: 8:30 am 2/16/2022



MARATHON COUNTY BROADBAND TASK FORCE MEETING

Minutes

Monday, January 24 at 4:00 P.M.

Webex/Assembly Room, 500 Forest St, Wausau WI

| Members | Present/Web-Phone | Absent |
|---------------------|-------------------|--------|
| Chair John Robinson | P | |
| Sandi Cihlar | P | |
| Jon Euting | W | |
| Sara Guild | W | |
| Jacob Langenhahn | W | |
| Milton Olson | W | |
| Kurt Schoenrock | W | |

Also Present: Gerry Klein, Valerie Carrillo, Jason Hausler, Noor Ali Hassan

VIA Web or Phone: Kurt Gibbs, Valerie Carrillo, Andy Faust, Eric Budleski, Lance Leonhard, Randy Fifrick, Scott Nyman, Jean Maszk, Jonathan Fisher

1. Call Meeting to Order: Chair Robinson called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.
2. Public Comments (15 Minute limit) - none
3. **CIHLAR MAKE A MOTION; SECOND BY LAGENHAHN TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 15, 2021 AND DECEMBER 14, 2021 BROADBAND TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES. MOTION CARRIED.**
4. **Educational Presentations and Committee Discussion:**

A. Update on RDOF progress

Discussion:

Charter and LTD – Gigabyte service

B. Update on NTIA Grant Application

Discussion:

No update at this time.

C. Discussion of Other Funding Opportunities

Discussion:

Supervisor Robinson provided updates on other funding opportunities that are in discussion. Funding opportunities being considered include grants and loans and Supervisor Robinson stated he has been engaged in online training regarding future funding opportunities.

Supervisor Robinson stated that \$65 Billion was set aside for Broadband Expansion in the Infrastructure Bill. It is mostly tied to access but there is increasing conversations about affordability with that funding.

Supervisor Robinson expressed that the Marathon County Board would be getting a presentation tomorrow night regarding the County’s utilization of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

D. Update on Bug Tussel

Discussion:

Supervisor Robinson stated that Bug Tussel has secured bonding and 25 million of that bonding was for Marathon County. This includes 370 miles of fiber in their plans to use the funding.

Gerry Klein and Supervisor Robinson provided updates about the Bug Tussel project as outlined in their presentation given during the MLK Jr. Day Presentation. Slides of the presentation are available.

Supervisor Robinson stated that Bug Tussel was still in need of additional funds.

Supervisor Cihlar asked which areas of the project would be impacted by the lack of funds, which Supervisor Robinson stated he was not sure. No commitments have been made at this time. Supervisor

Cihlar stated that this is a lot of information to take in at this time and that consistent updates as they are available would be appreciated. He stated that Noor Ali Hassan has a weekly meeting with Bug Tussel and will be able to provide updates as they come.

Kurt Schoenrock expressed that he has gotten questions from the public about what the task force is working on and thus asked if the information available is understandable by the general public. He stated that the information is available online but question if the general public understand what it all means. Eric Budleski agreed. Supervisor Robinson mentioned that there is an opportunity to put something together in the future once things are solidified more.

Supervisor Cihlar echoed the comments about putting something out to the public, either online or comparable, that could help educate the general population and build capacity and support for projects and initiatives moving forward.

Supervisor Gibbs expressed some concern about putting too much information out at this time due to many variables changing on a consistent basis. He expressed that once things are firm and turned on and ready for implementation, we share at that time.

Milton Olson asked Supervisor Robinson if there is a minimum investment requested from Marathon County Towns for Broadband work moving forward. There is no policy or benchmark set at this time. Supervisor Robinson expressed that any investment would help out. Administrator Leonhard agreed and said financial investment goes above and beyond a simple letter of support.

Eric Budleski stated that communicating all the good work that is being done is important, whether through TV or a Press Release, a one pager or elevator speech is vital to keeping projects heading in the right direction.

Supervisor Robinson said that he will work on an outline of information to share with the hope to have something available in the near future.

5. **Policy Discussion And Possible Action:**

A. Public Education on Use of GeoPartners Survey Tool of Unmet Needs

Andy Faust provided an update on GeoPartners from the North Central Regional Planning process. He mentioned there were some licensing issues being worked out at this time but things are moving forward. Andy outlined some of the speed tests that have come in and how to input data and share out the resource to others.

Supervisor Robinson asked some about entering additional information into the system and Andy Faust stated that he has some additional information that he would share with him and how to start sharing it out within the County. Andy Faust expressed that starting with County employees may be a good first step as things roll out.

Jon Euting asked about comparing data within the system to gauge impact over time as it relates to the work of Bug Tussel and others. Andy Faust mentioned that while he is not an expert in the software, he does believe you can pull data by date ranges.

Supervisor Cihlar expressed that working with our Town Clerks would be important to underscore the needs for Towns to get involved in these efforts. Seeing where the 41 Towns and their clerks are at relative to Broadband would be significant. Other contact groups were brainstormed.

B. Partnership Opportunities for the Wisconsin PSC's Broadband Access Grant \$100 Million

Supervisor Robinson stated that applications are due the 17th of March. County is looking at 50 upload and 10 download speeds in the grant application to future proof their investment. He stated that there is \$114 thousand left over from last year that could be leveraged in this grant application process, along with ARPA funds.

Scott Nyman from Cirrinity mentioned that he liked the process that the County took last time in

approve projects to move forward in the process. Due to the application deadline being soon.

1. Internet Service Providers

A letter will be crafted and sent out to ISP's asking them to submit proposals for county funding support and the Task Force will look to review those requests at the next meeting (moved up a week to February 21st). Once those proposals are moved forward, letters of support will be requested. **Deadline for submitting proposals, via a scoping statement, would be due by February 14th?**

2. Other Units of Government

3. Use of Unallocated Capital Improvement Funds for Broadband Expansion

Motion to move capital expense dollars forward, total of \$114 thousand, from 2021 to 2022 was made by Guild, second by Olson, motion carried.

C. Potential Legislative Changes that Could Expand Access to Internet Services

Supervisor Robinson sought ideas from the Task Force about full disclosure of Fiber Connections?

Supervisor Langenhahn mentioned that private providers not sharing information limits the ability of public officials to move forward with their efforts to help the community.

Supervisor Gibbs updated the Task Force on the conversations he had with the Wisconsin Counties Association and that there may be potentially something moving forward about a provision to getting data from private entities where public dollars are used. This would include both county funds along with ARPA dollars. Supervisor Langenhahn was cautious about moving this forward as it may make the county less attractive to partners moving forward. Clarification was had about who was moving this forward and it was discussed.

Supervisor Gibbs was going to connect with NACO about how Marathon County can help move this forward.

6. Next Meeting Topics

1. Making information available to the general public
2. Promotion of GeoPartners
3. Application letter to ISPs
4. Draft on transparency of infrastructure policy

7. Next Meeting: February 21, 2022 (Scheduled meeting was moved up one week to allow for processing.)

8. Adjournment

OLSON MOTION TO ADJOURN MEETING, CIHLAR SECOND. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. MEETING ADJOURNED AT 5:44pm.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Kathy Johnson

Memorandum



To: Greater Wausau Prosperity Partnership
From: John Robinson, Marathon County Broadband Task Force Chair
Date: February 2, 2022
Re: Broadband Expansion Efforts in Marathon County

Thank you for the opportunity to provide an update to you relating to Marathon County's efforts to expand access to broadband services to our residents. As you may be aware, current statutes limit the role that local units of government can play in providing broadband services. Therefore, while we can make investments in building capacity, or the backbone commonly referred to as the "middle mile," the County is limited in providing the service directly to businesses and residents, commonly referred to as the "last mile."

Background

The County Board has recognized a need to expand broadband access which resulted in the commissioning of a [Broadband Gap Analysis](#) from Ebert & Associates in 2009. The report found:

- *"Broadband offerings in Marathon County are diverse in capacity and costs."*
- *"There are instances in which the lack of broadband capacity leaves rural small businesses and residents at a distinct disadvantage."*
- 64% of residents and 26% of businesses are dissatisfied with their internet service.
- The quality of copper cabling to some homes is too poor for DSL to work.
- Rolling countryside with hills and dales and dense foliage present challenges for wireless coverage.

At that time, the County decided to let the "free market" approach work relying on Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to fill the gaps.

Key Milestones

- From **2009 to 2011**, government, health care systems, and educational institutions expanded the fiber ring for the Wausau Community Area Network.
- In **2015**, Frontier Communications sought funding through Phase II of the Connect America Fund, committing to provide 10 mbps download and 1 mbps upload speeds to areas in eastern Marathon County. Other providers also expanded their coverage footprint. Most of the expansion was in the Wausau metro area, where the providers could receive a higher return on investment leaving rural areas underserved. Those speeds are not adequate to meet the demand today.

- In **2015**, the County Board created a Broadband Connectivity Task Force to recommend strategies and policies to address connectivity and speed of internet access in rural Marathon County. That Task Force made several recommendations, including:
 - Work with Non-Governmental Entities & Internet Service Providers (ISP) to Open Lines of Communication
 - Develop & Implement a County-wide Dig Once Policy to Enable the Adoption of Broadband Expansion
 - Develop & Implement a County-wide Emergency Tower Use Policy for Wireless Broadband Expansion
- In response to growing complaints of the lack of reliable internet services throughout the County, the County Board retained Design Nine in **2018** to complete a [Broadband Assessment and Plan](#). The report presented in 2020 reviewed progress made since the preparation of the 2009 gap analysis and found that little had changed in rural areas of the County. Design Nine developed a plan that proposed constructing a series of towers with a fiber ring to provide wireless internet services to over 85% of the County. The cost for the plan was in excess of \$30 million.
- In light of the limitation on the County providing the last mile connection, a meeting with the ISPs serving the County was organized in March 2020. This meeting aimed to determine if the County built the system, would the ISPs rent the towers and fiber. There was little interest in leasing space from the County at that time.

Recent Efforts

The County created a Broadband Task Force in 2020 to: develop recommendations identifying the potential role of Marathon County in facilitating the expansion of Broadband access in Marathon County; review the Design Nine report and develop broad policies and partnership recommendations relating to the expansion of broadband/internet services throughout the County.

In late 2019 and early 2020, County Board members began receiving complaints of deteriorating copper phone lines and the lack of cellular service in northern and western portions of the County. The lack of reliable service created public safety issues associated with not having a reliable means to contact 911 in an emergency. A meeting was held with Frontier, and as a result, additional technicians were brought in to address the line failures. However, the lack of cell coverage and internet remained an issue. As a result, the Broadband Task Force identified this area as a priority in broadband expansion efforts.

The Task Force recommended that the County Board provide funding for broadband expansion, and as a result, the [2021 County Budget](#) earmarked \$250,000 for those efforts. However, the Task Force also set criteria making any funding conditional on the provider being able to offer at least 50/10 mbps service.

The Wisconsin Public Service Commission (PSC) had two solicitations for Broadband Expansion Grants in 2021. In the first round, the County partnered with Bug Tussel, Northwoods Connect, and Cirrinity on applications. As a result, Cirrinity was awarded funding for a project that served 88 properties in the Town of Reid.

In July 2021, the PSC held a second round of applications utilizing American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. In this round, Marathon County partnered with four ISPs on five applications. Unfortunately, there was only one award serving the areas around Norrie and Pike Lakes in the eastern portion of the County.

Earlier in 2021, the Federal Communication Commission notified CCO (Charter) and LTD of successful bids in reverse auctions associated with the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund. They have submitted a long-form application to determine eligibility as part of the approval process. If successful, they will provide gigabyte service to approximately 9,683 homes/businesses, primarily in the northern and western parts of the County. The FCC has been slow in giving approval, and once it is given, the companies have up to 10 years to provide service. The County has been working with parties to accelerate deployment.

In July 2021, the County Board adopted a resolution authorizing the submittal of a grant application to the National Telecommunication and Information Administration (NTIA), in partnership with Charter on a \$20 million project providing internet services in eastern Marathon County. The application is currently under review.

In October 2021, the County Board adopted resolutions allowing Bug Tussel to access conduit borrowing. Marathon County was part of a multi-county coalition that partnered with Bug Tussel. In exchange for the County's guarantee to back the bonds, Bug Tussel was able to access a lower interest rate of 3.24% and will provide the County with access to fiber strands and their towers in the County. Bug Tussel will be installing approximately 370 miles of fiber and 16 towers in 2022. Bug Tussel will connect properties along their fiber route over the next couple of years and offer wireless services around their towers. They are also partnering with AT&T to expand cellular coverage in the service area.

Future Opportunities

Marathon County will receive in excess of \$26.3 million through the American Rescue Plan to address issues associated with the pandemic. One of the eligible activities is funding broadband expansion. An equal amount of funds will be distributed amongst towns, villages, and cities in the County. The County is evaluating how to best utilize those funds and will consider leveraging those funds to expand broadband services. Our preference is to partner with other governments and maximize the use of additional federal and state funds.

In March 2022, the PSC will be accepting applications for the Broadband Expansion Grants. The Task Force has contacted the ISPs serving the County to determine if they are interested in partnering with the County. Responses are due February 14th. The County has \$114,000 remaining in the capital improvement fund to partner with those ISPs. Our review of successful grant applications in previous rounds showed that applications that demonstrated strong local partnerships scored higher. Over the next month, we will be reaching out to you for your support of potential applications both in terms of letters of support as well as a potential funding partner. The County and the Marshfield Clinic Health System were financial partners in the two successful grant applications to date.

Recently, the Economic Development Agencies in the state contracted with GeoPartners to conduct speed tests to identify unserved and underserved areas. This information is critical to determine where we should focus our future efforts and to support future grant applications. Given the lack of reliable data, it is vital that we have as many individuals and businesses as possible participate in the speed test. Please see the attached flyer for additional information and consider encouraging your employees and others to take the speed test.

Future Challenges

The recently passed federal Infrastructure Bill set aside \$65 billion for broadband expansion. One of the new components is addressing Digital Equity to ensure that parties not only have access to the internet but that they can afford it as well. Through the PSC, the State of Wisconsin is developing a plan to address these issues. Marathon County will need to evaluate its role in these efforts as we look forward.

The County is willing to work with any internet service provider to expand reliable service with a long-term goal of fiber to the premises. Our success will be determined by the partnerships we are able to form.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide you with an update. Please feel free to contact me at john.robinson@co.marathon.wi.us or at 715-212-2227 with any questions.

WHAT IS YOUR



INTERNET SPEED?



The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, in partnership with Marathon County, is conducting a regional internet speed testing initiative.

Many communities that need broadband funding may miss out because the data showing their need isn't available. The goal of this project is to create an accurate regional map of where internet service is and is not available in Central Wisconsin and what speeds people are currently receiving.

Take the speed test today and encourage your friends, neighbors, and co-workers to do the same!

Scan



Visit



[www.ncwrpc.org/ncwrpc2021/
broadband-speed-test/](http://www.ncwrpc.org/ncwrpc2021/broadband-speed-test/)

or

Call



If you have no internet for any reason, please call **715-261-1404** to report the address.

No Internet? Let us know! If you don't have internet available at your residence or business due to no service being available or other barriers, please call **715-261-1404** to report the address.

Marathon County 2022 PSC Broadband Expansion

| Company | Area served | Residences & Business Served | Project Costs | PSC Request | Company investment | Request from County |
|----------------|--|---|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Cirrinity | Reid and Bevent | 368 | \$1,669,500 | \$1,001,700 | \$527,800 | \$70,000 |
| LTD | LTD's RDOF Area | 4,250 | \$13,906,614.47 | \$6,953,307.23 | \$5,284,513.50 | \$1,668,793.74 |
| Bug Tussel | Towns of Guenther, Knowlton, and the Village of Kronenwetter | There are 770 addresses along the proposed fiber route, of which 166 will be serviced directly from the middle mile independent of this project. Of the remaining 605 address points, 15 are businesses and 590 are residential | \$6,000,000 | \$3,000,000 | \$1,500,000 | \$1,500,000 |
| Frontier | Northeast, Southeast, and Southwest Marathon County | 4,024 | \$9,448,352 | \$3,799,341 | \$4,724,176 | \$944,835 |
| Charter | TBD | 232 | \$3,890,304 | TBD | TBD | \$1,600,000 |

Grant Request

| Other Match | Speed | Type of service | Miles | Contact | Affordable Connectivity Program | Completion |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|---|
| \$70,000 Town of Reid | 1 Gigabit | FTTP | 39.75 miles | Scott Nyman | Yes | Fall 2022 |
| N/A | 1 Gigabit | FTTH | N/A | Kimberly Young | Yes | Fall 2024 |
| N/A | 1 Gigabit | FTTH | 100 miles | Steve Schneider | No | End of 2024 |
| N/A | 1 Gigabit | FTTH | 487 miles | Scott Bohler | Yes | 2 years from the date the application is approved |
| N/A | 1000/500 Mbps. | FTTP | TBD | Celeste Flynn | TBD | TBD |

Bug Tussel



Mon 2/14/2022 11:59 AM

Mitchel Olson <Mitchel.Olson@bugtusselwireless.com>

[EXTERNAL] RE: PSC Broadband Expansion Grants

To Noor Ali Hassan

Cc Steve Schneider; John Robinson; Mark Dodge

You forwarded this message on 2/15/2022 4:16 PM.

Message ProjectArea.pdf GrantEligibility.pdf

Please see the attached, that being the proposed map for a fiber project for which we would like to partner with Marathon County. Utilizing the middle-mile which will be constructed later this year, we seek to connect approximately 550 locations in the Towns of Guenther, Knowlton, and the Village of Kronenwetter, east of I39, with Fiber to the Home. The significant majority of the project area is within the areas identified as eligible for grant funding by the Public Service Commission.

The project consists of approximately 100 miles of fiber, and will cost an estimated \$6,000,000 to construct. Bug Tussel is able to contribute \$1,500,000 to the total cost of the project, with the remainder of the funding coming from Marathon County and the Wisconsin Public Service Commission.

Symmetrical 1GB service will be available to the locations serviced by this project.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mitchel L. Olson

Chief Development Officer | General Counsel

Bug Tussel Wireless, LLC

Office: 920.940.0138

mitchel.olson@bugtusselwireless.com



Thu 2/17/2022 12:34 PM

Mitchel Olson <Mitchel.Olson@bugtusselwireless.com>

[EXTERNAL] RE: PSC Broadband Expansion Grants

To Noor Ali Hassan

Cc Steve Schneider; John Robinson; Mark Dodge; Lance Leonhard; Gerard Klein

1. \$1,500,00 from the county, \$3,000,000 from the PSC.
2. There are 770 addresses along the proposed fiber route, of which 166 will be serviced directly from the middle mile independent of this project. Of the remaining 605 address points, 15 are businesses and 590 are residential.
3. The project would be constructed during late 2023 and early 2024, with the expectation that all customers would be online by the end of 2024.
4. Searching for the answer on this. I believe "No", but am trying to confirm.

From: Noor Ali Hassan <Noor.AliHassan@co.marathon.wi.us>

Sent: Monday, February 14, 2022 3:26 PM

To: Mitchel Olson <Mitchel.Olson@bugtusselwireless.com>

Cc: Steve Schneider <Steve.Schneider@bugtusselwireless.com>; John Robinson <John.Robinson@co.marathon.wi.us>; Mark Dodge <Mark.Dodge@bugtusselwireless.com>; Lance Leonhard <Lance.Leonhard@co.marathon.wi.us>; Gerard Klein <Gerard.Klein@co.marathon.wi.us>

Subject: RE: PSC Broadband Expansion Grants

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello Mitchel,

Thank you for submitting the proposal and for the interest in working with Marathon County.

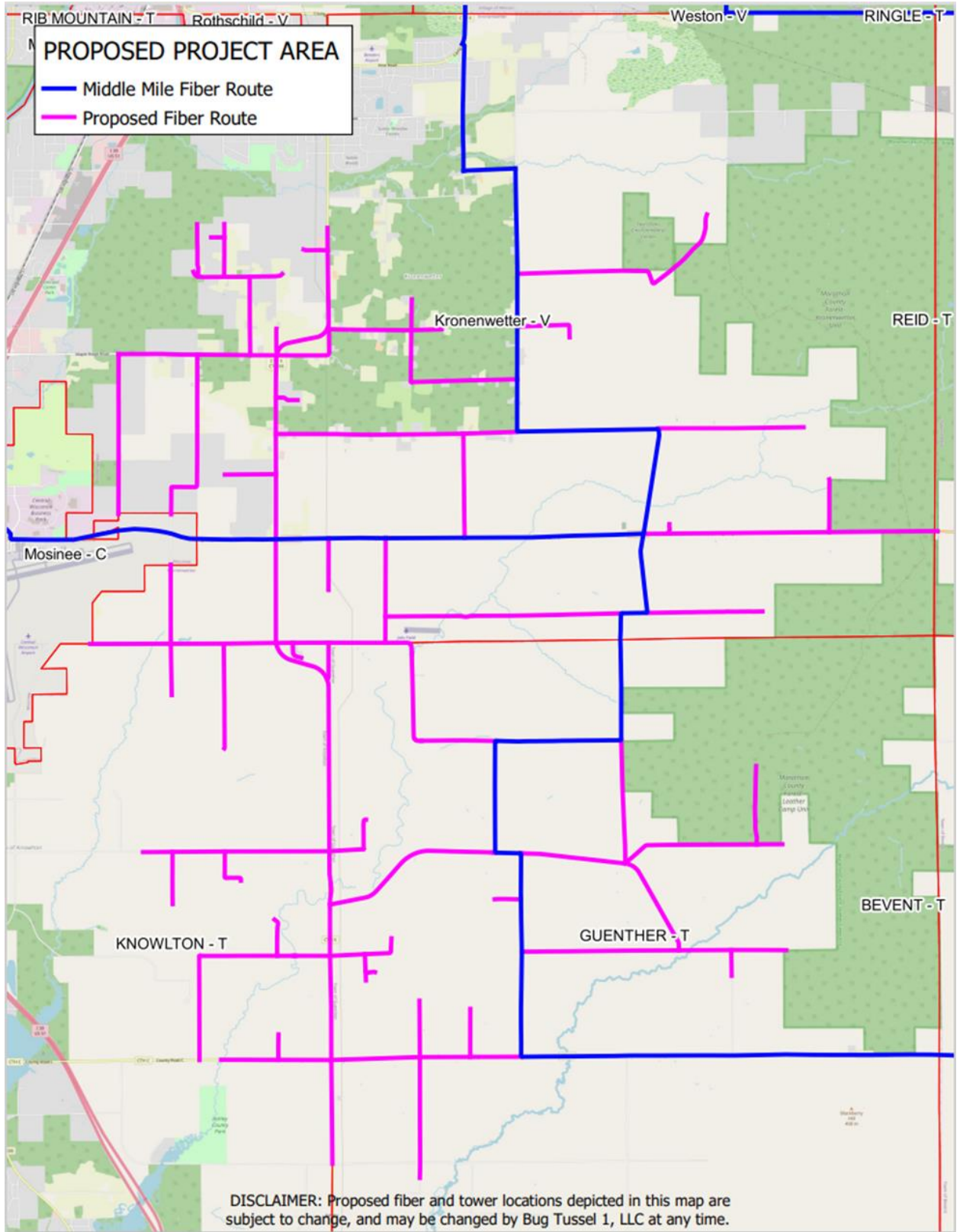
I would appreciate it if you could please specify:

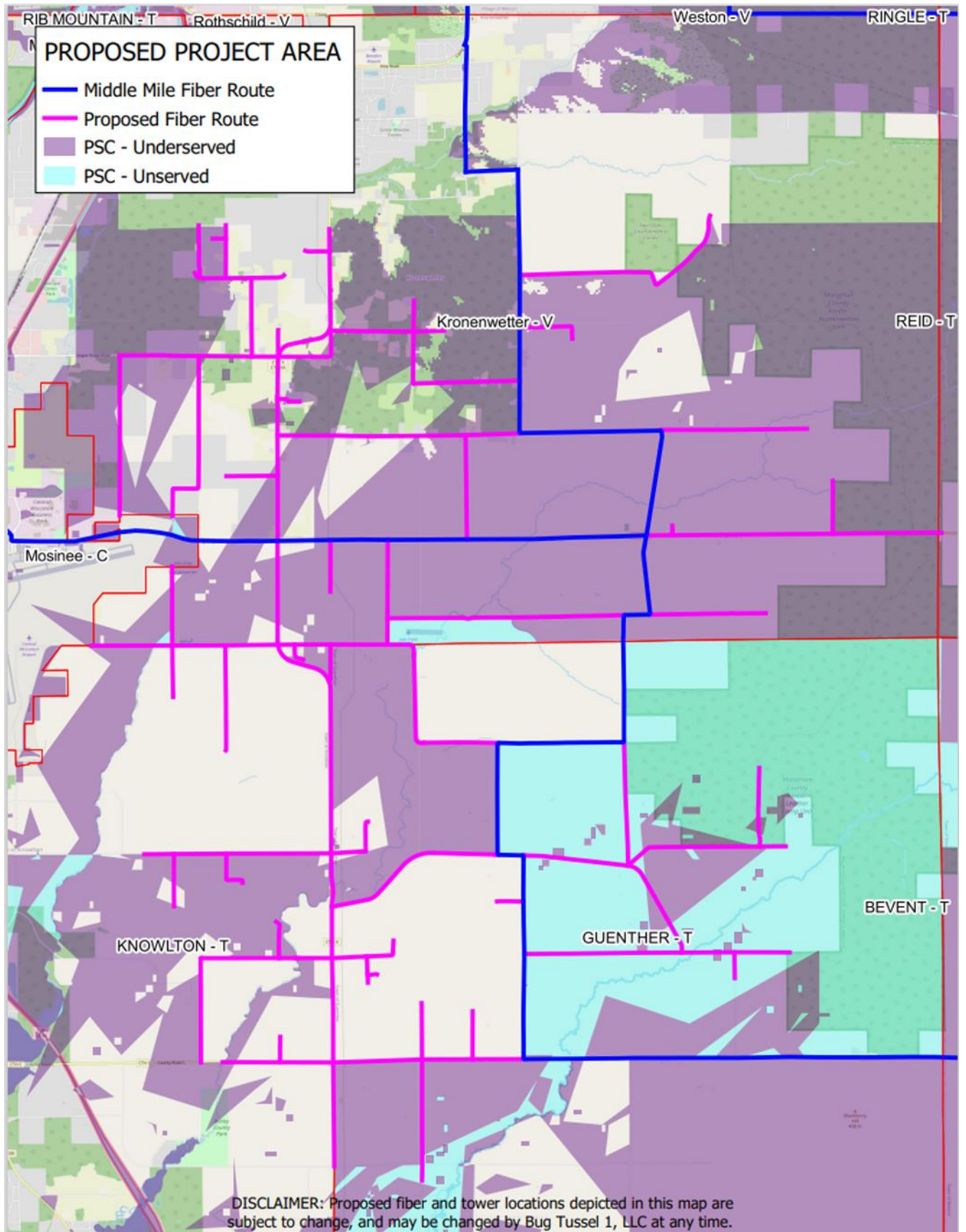
- (1) the amount requested from the County and the amount requested from the PSC.
- (2) Number of residences and businesses served
- (3) Estimated completion date
- (4) And whether an affordable connectivity program would be available

Thank You.

Best,

Noor





Charter



Mon 2/14/2022 5:42 PM

Flynn, Celeste M <Celeste.Flynn@charter.com>

[EXTERNAL] RE: PSC Broadband Expansion Grants

To John Robinson

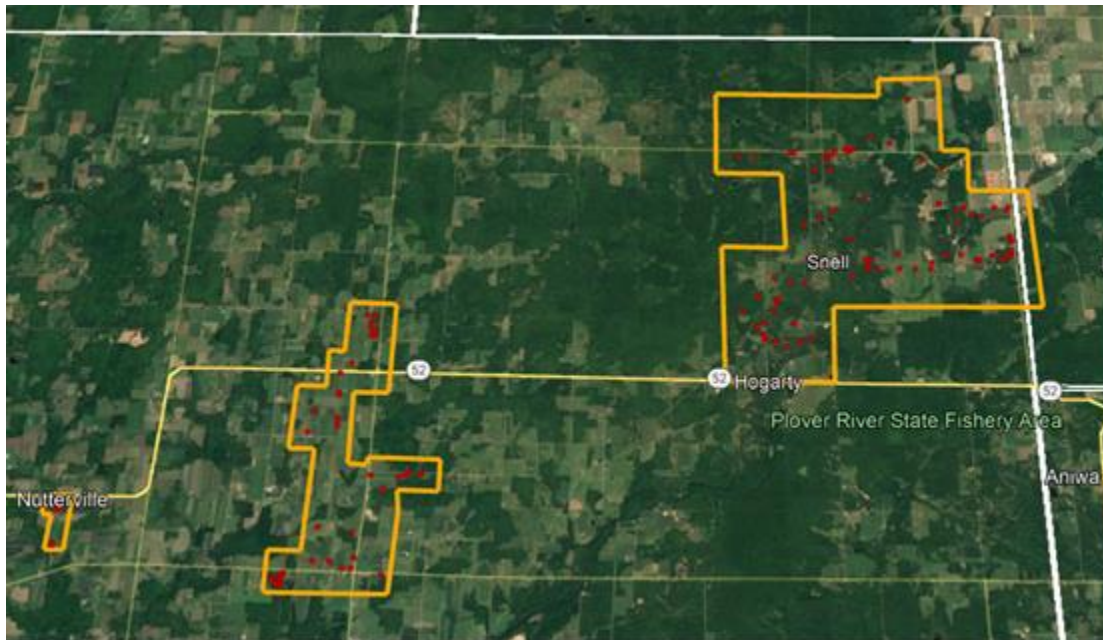
Cc Raschka, Adam; Hill, Mike S; Hatchell, Teri A; Noor Ali Hassan; Gerard Klein; Sara Guild; Lance Leonhard; Flynn, Celeste M

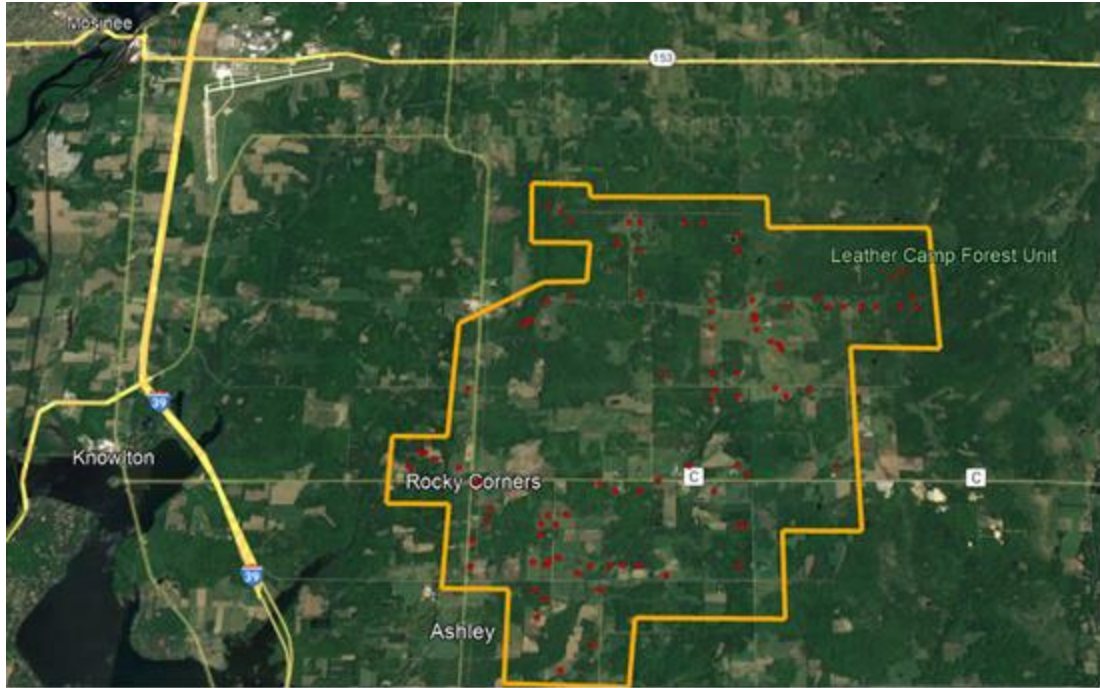
You replied to this message on 2/16/2022 8:20 AM.

John,

I know your deadline for partnership proposals are due today. This area was identified after our conversation. However, we are still analyzing the PSC's eligibility map that was updated and released this past Thursday so if we find additional areas we will let you know. Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions.

- Area to be served - (see maps below)
- Number of residents and businesses covered by the project: 232 locations
- Type of project - fiber to the premise
- Project cost - \$3,890,304
- Expected contribution from Marathon County- \$1.6 million
- Expected upload and download speeds- 1000/500 Mbps.







Subject: Proposed Project for Marathon County 2022 PSC Broadband Expansion Grant round

Funding available - \$128 Million in funding for the 2022 Public Service Commission Grant round 5-BF-2022

Overview of area:

The project would build 39.75 miles of Fiber To The Home(FTTH) 10 Gigabit capable low latency Broadband to 368 homes and businesses in the entire town of Reid and South to the town of Bevent. This project would build to the South off of our existing Fiber that was installed in partnership with Marathon County from a previous Grant round as well as meet up with our existing fiber to South in Bevent. The town of Reid has already committed \$70,000 in matching ARPA funds for the project and we would also use this build to increase our middle mile fiber counts for our partnership with Bug Tussel. Maps below will show the route in LIGHT Green and show LIGHT Green pins with homes and businesses passed. Cirrinity is also a participant in the Affordable Connectivity Program(ACP) and all areas would be able to apply for affordable reliable Broadband.

Total project cost - \$1,669,500

60% Request Grant funds from PSC Broadband expansion grant - \$1,001,700

40% Remaining Matching funds to cover from Cirrinity/Towns/County matching funds - \$667,800

Town of Reid ARPA Match - \$70,000

Requested Marathon County Match(amount is adjustable as required)- \$70,000

Cirrinity matching funds - \$527,800

Miles of Fiber to The Home 39.75

Homes/businesses passed - 368

Expected upload/Download 1 Gigabit/1 Gigabit but are beginning our testing of XGS-PON which will allow 10 Gigabit/10Gigabit. Availability will be Fall 2022 to our current customers and the customers along this project route.

Timeline of the Grant:

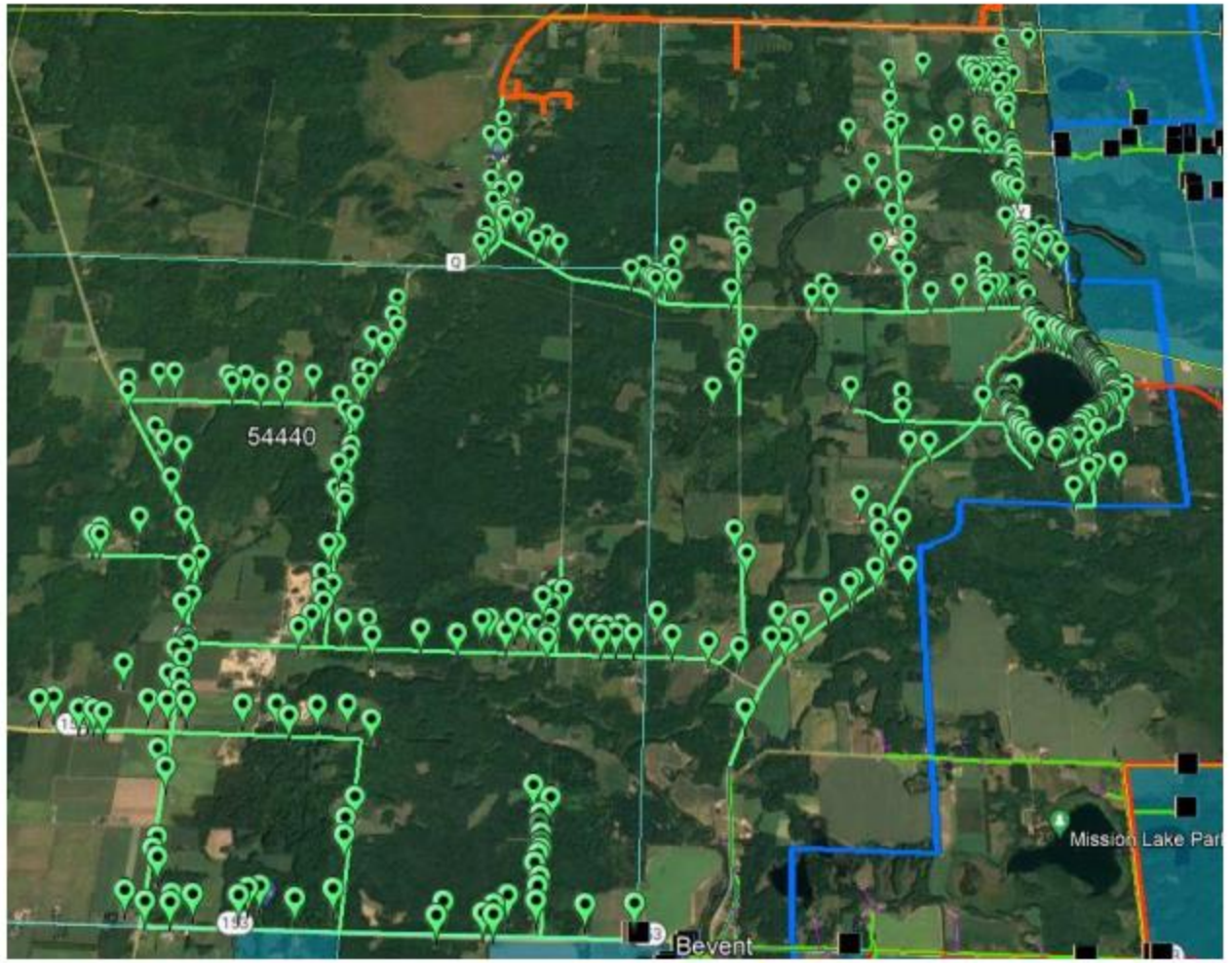
Application submitted by March 17, 2022

Objection Period closes April 14, 2022

Awards expected to be announced June/July 2022

If awarded materials are currently ordered and available so project would start Spring 2023 However, potentially some areas in Fall of 2022 if materials(fiber, etc.) are not delayed.

MAPS ON FOLLOWING PAGES every LIGHT Green Balloon is a home/business passed with 10 Gigabit capable Broadband



Frontier Communications

Fiber-to-the-home deployment for Marathon County

In response to Marathon County's communication of January 28, 2022 seeking proposals for possible broadband grant applications to the State of Wisconsin, Frontier Communications ("Frontier") provides the following information regarding a proposed fiber-to-the-home deployment. Response to specific issues identified in the County's letter follow:

Area to be served.

In Frontier's Marathon County service area, there are approximately 6,145 premises that are grant-eligible (underserved or unserved) under the State broadband grant program. Frontier is proposing to serve 4,024 (66%) of these grant-eligible premises in Marathon County that fall in Frontier's footprint with symmetrical, gigabit fiber broadband internet service. Please note, this estimate of eligible locations was based on the preliminary eligible location data that the State had posted on their website for their broadband grant program. Very recently, the State updated their list of eligible location data to a "final" list. Frontier will incorporate that data from the "final" list in the future. A map depicting the extent of the proposed project is attached, with the small "home" icons identifying locations to be served by this project.

Number of residents and businesses covered by the project.

Due to the limited time available to respond to this opportunity, in this proposal Frontier has focused on residential and small business locations. The intention is that this project will also include small business and all other commercial locations within the area. Given additional preparation time, specific information regarding those business locations can be incorporated in the proposal. The project is intended to cover 4,024 residential and small business locations.

Project cost

The total cost of the project is estimated to \$9,448,352. This estimate may change once the full incorporation of the "final" eligible location list is completed, but it is expected that any change will be minimal.

Expected contribution from Marathon County.

The estimated overall cost for the project is \$9,448,352. Frontier would need a 50% contribution (or approximately \$4.7M) from other parties (State of Wisconsin, Marathon County) to make the project financially viable.

Expected upload and download speeds.

Service will be available at up to 1Gig, symmetrical. Current plans for service levels and associated pricing are:

| Speed | Monthly price (residential) | Monthly price (business) |
|----------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 300/300M | | \$59.99 |
| 500/500M | \$64.99 | |
| 700/700M | | \$95.99 |
| 1/1Gig | \$89.99 | \$199.99 |

Below and attached are some additional information regarding Frontier's proposed project:

1. The areas being served)

Please see attached file "Maps.pdf" which depicts the locations to be served in a map view. I would note that there are no locations in the northwest part of the county. Also, the "Locations by Town.pdf" file identifies the locations to be served by town. The green lines on the original map depicted Frontier's exchange boundaries. That information is not included on these attached maps.

2. The exact amount that is being requested from the County)

While Frontier is not wedded to any specific approach regarding the allocation of the 50% subsidy requested, we would propose asking the County for 10% of the project cost (or \$944,835) with the remaining 40% to be sought from the State. Frontier would also ask the County to provide other non-financial support, if possible, such as expedited permitting and other commitments that can be noted in the application to the State program to demonstrate a cooperative partnership with the county. I would note that Frontier is willing to have future meetings with the County or customers as the project gets underway.

3. The exact PSC request amount)

Frontier would propose asking the State for 40% of the project cost (or \$3,779,341).

4. Miles being covered)

The project as planned would place a total of 487 fiber miles with 255 of those miles directly serving grant-eligible locations.

5. Whether an affordable connectivity program will be available)

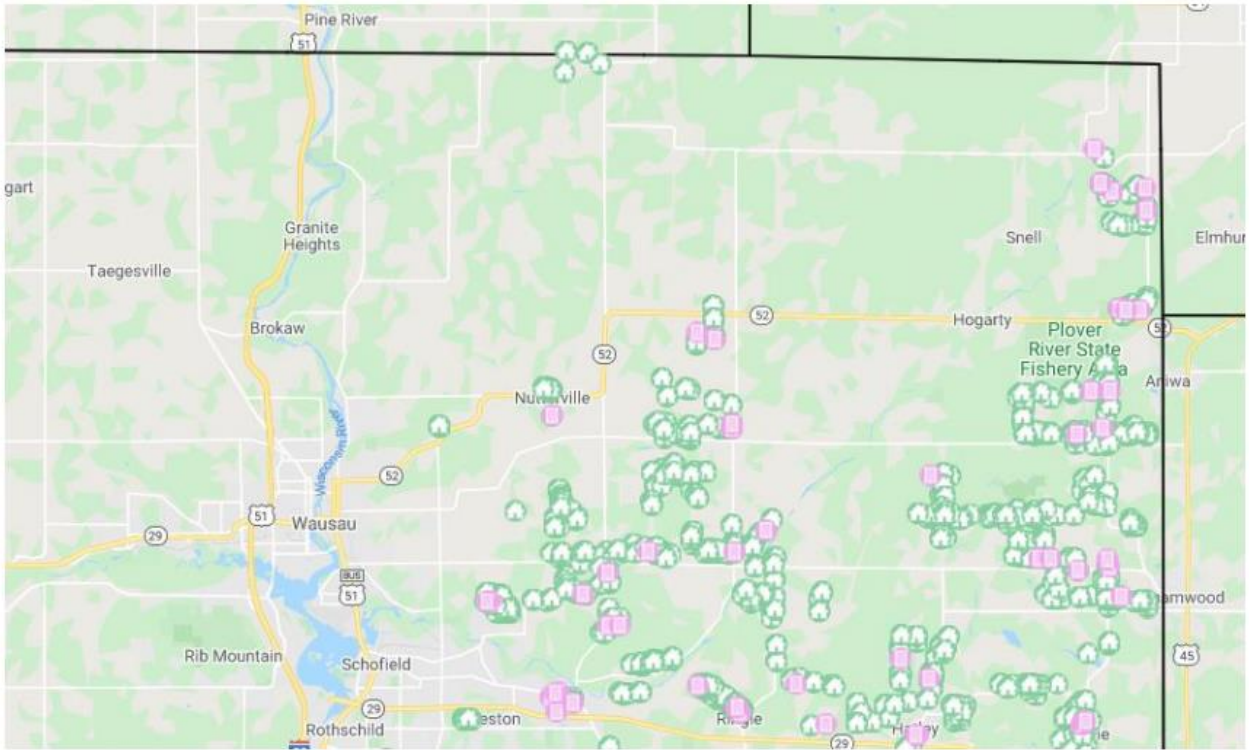
Frontier does participate in the Affordable Connectivity Program, which provides a credit for qualifying customers.



6. Timeline and estimated completion date)

Frontier would anticipate completion of the project by 2 years from the date the application is approved.

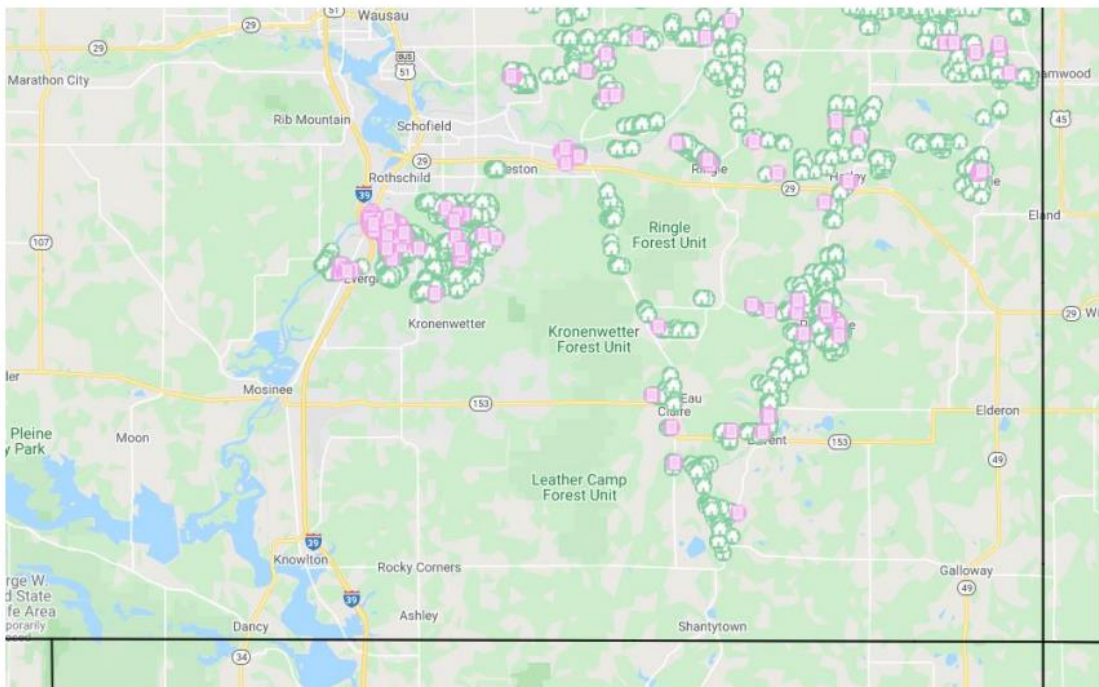
| Towns | # of Proposed Build Grant Eligible Prens | % of Total |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Kronenwetter village WI | 1,040 | 26% |
| Weston village WI | 569 | 14% |
| Reid town WI | 437 | 11% |
| Ringle town WI | 332 | 8% |
| Plover town WI | 274 | 7% |
| Norrie town WI | 264 | 7% |
| Rothschild village WI | 249 | 6% |
| Easton town WI | 151 | 4% |
| Bevent town WI | 129 | 3% |
| Elderon town WI | 90 | 2% |
| Wausau town WI | 76 | 2% |
| Weston town WI | 73 | 2% |
| Eau Pleine town WI | 73 | 2% |
| Brighton town WI | 63 | 2% |
| Harrison town WI | 53 | 1% |
| Frankfort town WI | 42 | 1% |
| Spencer town WI | 35 | 1% |
| McMillan town WI | 26 | 1% |
| Stratford village WI | 15 | 0% |
| Cleveland town WI | 8 | 0% |
| Birnamwood village WI | 7 | 0% |
| Hatley village WI | 6 | 0% |
| Texas town WI | 6 | 0% |
| Hull town WI | 4 | 0% |
| Colby city WI | 2 | 0% |
| Total | 4,024 | 100% |



Northeast Marathon County



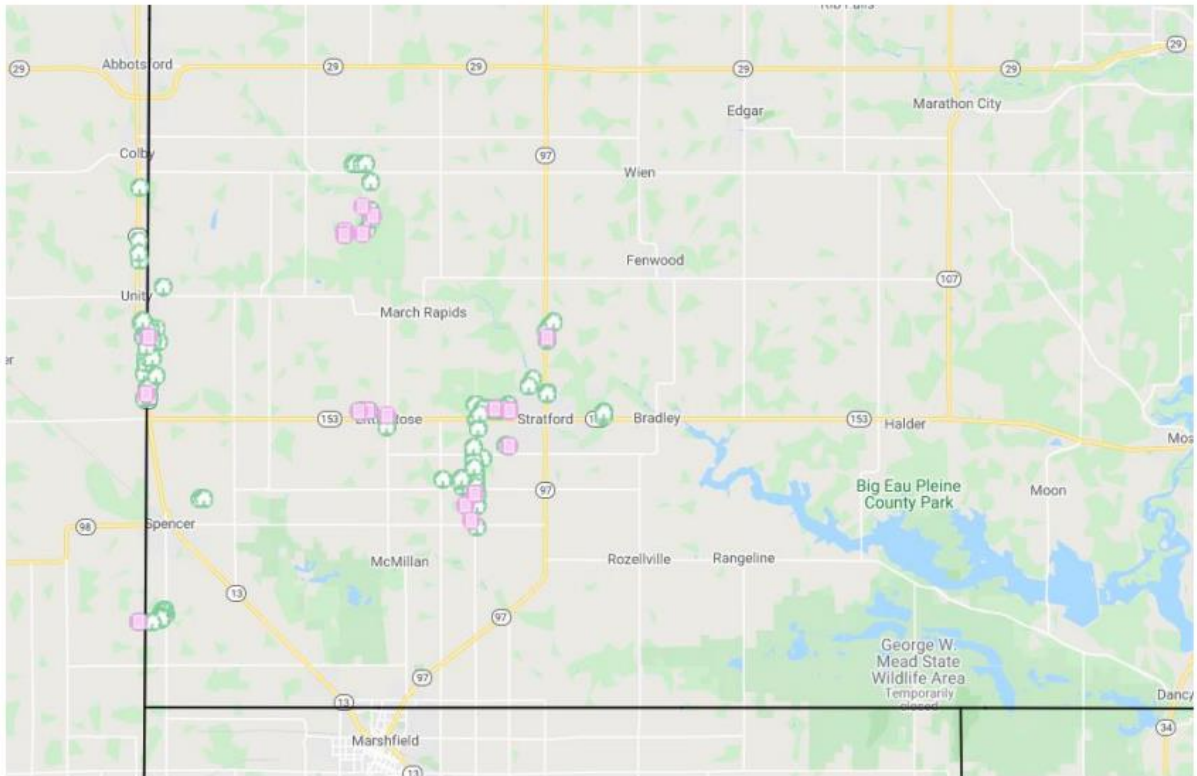
-  Small Businesses
-  Residential



Southeast Marathon County



-  Small Businesses
-  Residential

Southwest Marathon County



-  Small Businesses
-  Residential

THE BROADBAND TASK FORCE

PROPOSAL RESPONSE



Prepared for



February 14, 2022

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LTD was awarded RDOF areas in Marathon County in December 2020. LTD is planning the RDOF project though it will not be completed until 2030; in the interim, LTD will start the Marathon County projects in LTD's RDOF area that will bring Fiber to the Home (FTTH) sooner the unserved/underserved communities of the County. This proposed project is specifically an FTTH using a fiber technology solution in which the fiber will be installed aerially, allowing this joint Partnership the ability to offer the residence and businesses multiple options for service. One note is that the minimum option being requested is the required 100Mbps x 100Mbps symmetrical speed. **This project will provide up to 1G x 1G at Project launch and has the current ability to provide an infinity of gigs based on demands and requirements for the future!**

LTD Broadband has made the expansion of broadband internet access a top priority across the nation to spur economic development; attract new residents; enhance residents' education, health care, and tourism; and improve residents' overall quality of life. LTD is excited to work with Marathon County on expanding broadband access to their rural unserved, and underserved residents and businesses.

ELIGIBILITY AND EXPERIENCE

LTD Broadband was founded in 2011 to bring reliable, affordable broadband to rural and urban areas. Since its inception, LTD Broadband has grown to service over 17,000 subscribers and currently serves the upper Midwest in Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. We are servicing territories covering over 50,000 square RDOG and 2,500 towers in over 750 cities.

LTD has made the expansion of broadband internet access a top priority to spur economic development, attract new residents, enhance residents' education, and healthcare, improving the overall quality of life over the years. LTD continues to develop broadband and actively seeks out grants to aid in our pursuit. LTD was awarded and completed a CAF II project 4 years ahead of schedule. Through grant projects along with rural and urban projects, LTD has mastered the ability to conceptualize, plan and develop, build, manage multiple projects, and scale operations through small and large projects.

The success of LTD is due to the strong and deep Partnerships along with the Executive Team that has been the driving force behind the current and future success of the company.

Corey Hauer, CEO

Hauer, Founder of LTD Broadband, earned his degree in Computer and Electrical Engineering from Purdue University. Hauer holds over 25 years of experience in building companies and systems focused on broadband networks. Multiple telecommunication firms, hospitality

businesses, wireless ISPs, regional airlines, law firms, and manufacturers have sought consulting engagements from Hauer on deploying innovative technologies.

Frank E. Glaszner, COO

Frank brings over 18 years of telecommunication and technology experience to the table. In addition, he brings 25 years of experience as a resourceful and strategic sales executive as a Lean Six Sigma Black Belt (ICBB), his ability to adapt to any environment and produce results utilizing his vision for process, precision, systematic, and methodical approaches is unparalleled.

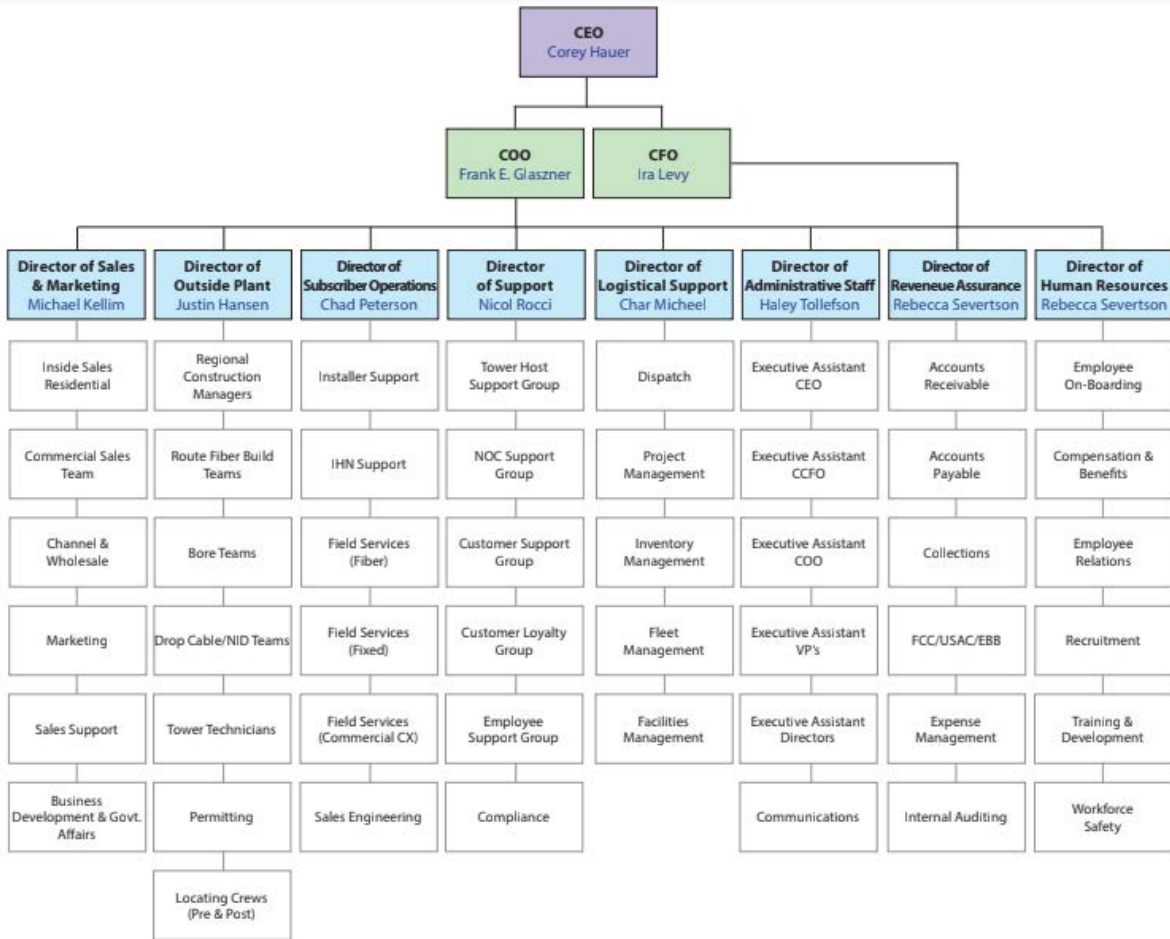
Within the telecommunication and technology industry, his vast knowledge has assisted several companies in implementing sales methodology to yield record results as well as solutions sales, business development, channel development, sales management, WAN/LAN Design, and Telephony & Data Liaison.

Ira Levy, CFO

In addition to a Bachelor of Science degree in Finance from the University of Florida and a Master's Degree in Accountancy from the University of Houston. Ira has extensive Wireless Telecommunications (Top 4 carrier, MVNO, DAS, Small Cell, Service Provider), FinTech, e-commerce, and SaaS industry experience, having served in senior-level financial leadership positions at MetroPCS, Verizon Wireless, T-Mobile, AT&T, iWireless, Connectivity Wireless, and Mozido.

Ira has raised over \$3 billion in private equity and private and public debt transactions as well as served in a leading role in a successful IPO. He possesses deep subject matter expertise in all disciplines of corporate finance, including capital structuring and fund raising, contract negotiations, business intelligence and analysis, business planning, treasury, and revenue assurance. Ira has led multiple successful M&A transactions on both the buy and sell side and served as a Board Director for the Association of Financial Professionals.

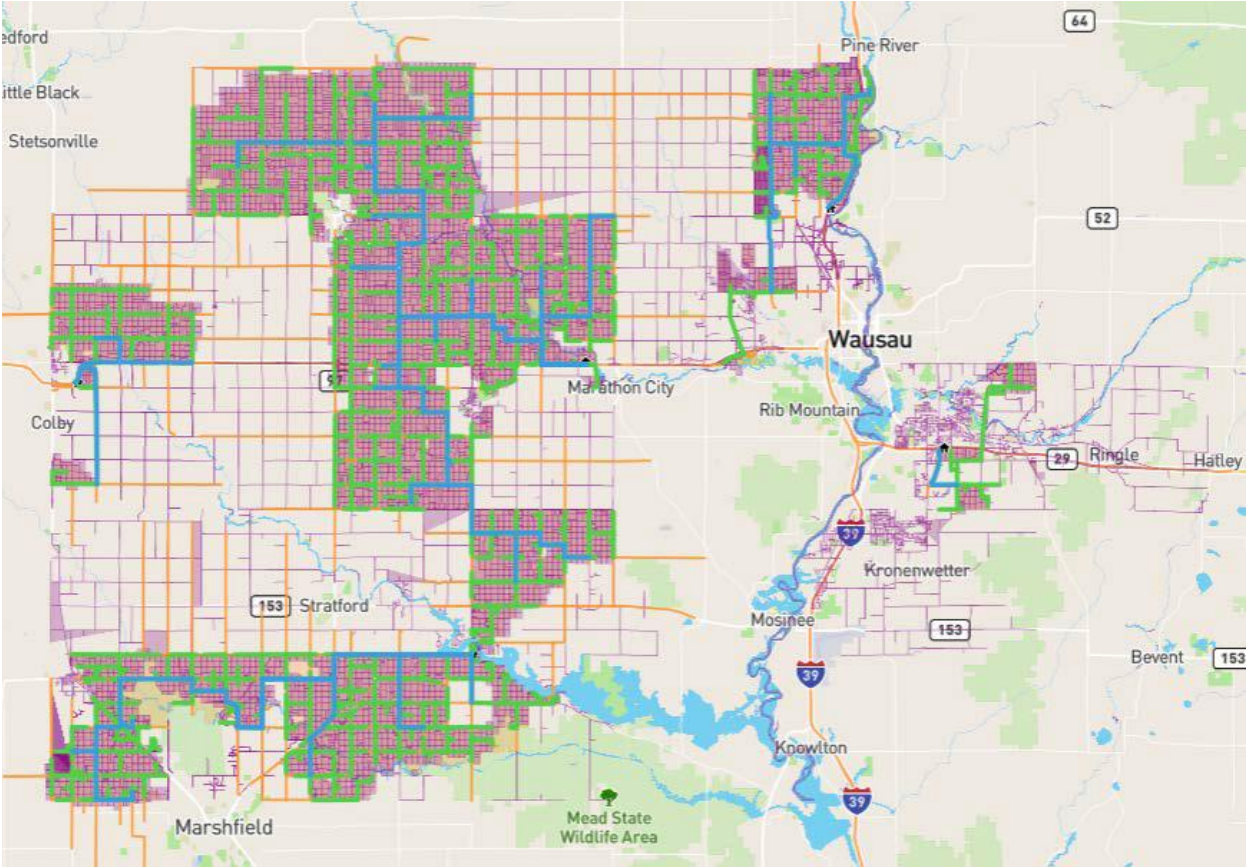
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



PROJECTED BUDGET

| Category | Per Unit Cost | Quantity | Total Estimated Cost |
|----------------------------|---------------|------------|----------------------|
| Fiber | \$0.65 | 11139266.2 | \$7,240,523.03 |
| Aerial Installation | \$0.42 | 6595150.47 | \$2,769,963.20 |
| OSP Engineering | \$0.20 | 11139266.2 | \$2,227,853.24 |
| Design Engineering | \$125.00 | 125 | \$15,625.00 |
| Construction Mgmt. | \$70.00 | 2400 | \$168,000.00 |
| Switching Equipment | \$9,900.00 | 6 | \$59,400.00 |
| Routing Equipment | \$13,000.00 | 2 | \$26,000.00 |
| Optical Equipment | \$250.00 | 72 | \$18,000.00 |
| Customer Premise Equipment | \$325.00 | 4250 | \$1,381,250.00 |
| Total | | | \$13,906,614.47 |
| Marathon Contribution | | | \$1,668,793.74 |
| Requested PSC Support | | | \$6,953,307.23 |
| LTD Broadband Contribution | | | \$5,284,513.50 |

5 PROPOSED NETWORK MAPS FOR EACH AREA



STATEMENT OF NEED FOR HIGH SPEED, DEPENDABLE, AND AFFORDABLE

This FTTH project in Marathon County is serving un/underserved residents and Businesses. While there are some farms and agricultural-type buildings, we will define all the households as residential. There is a total of 4,250 houses and businesses un/underserved not receiving high enough speeds to function daily. Limiting the number of educational studies, work from home, entertainment, and safe, dependable, acceptable service for emergency communications available. Reliable, high-speed internet is the most necessary means of communication for the last several years and in the future. Having limited or no access to the internet becomes a huge limitation for businesses. Businesses are not able to run their operations effectively without high-speed internet, thus, limiting the County's promotion of job growth and increasing tax base."

TECHNOLOGY

This project will use fiber technology providing Fiber to the Home for the entirety of the project area. The fiber technology used is installed aurally with Gigabit Passive Optical Network (GPON) topology. Based on the engineering design, the number of strands will be determined dependent on the density of the premises with calculations for growth. This could be anywhere from 24 to 576 strands or more.

The design and installation of this project will conform to all applicable federal, state, and local requirements and standard engineering practice, and the installed infrastructure will provide the service levels and speeds stated in this application.

This project will **EXCEED** the requirement of providing a service to the unserved or underserved households and businesses to reliably meet a symmetrical speed of 100 Mbps download and upload Interim Rule, C.F.R. § 35.6(e)(2), 86 Fed. Reg. 26786, 26823. To summarize, this project will deliver 1Gb x 1Gb symmetrical service.

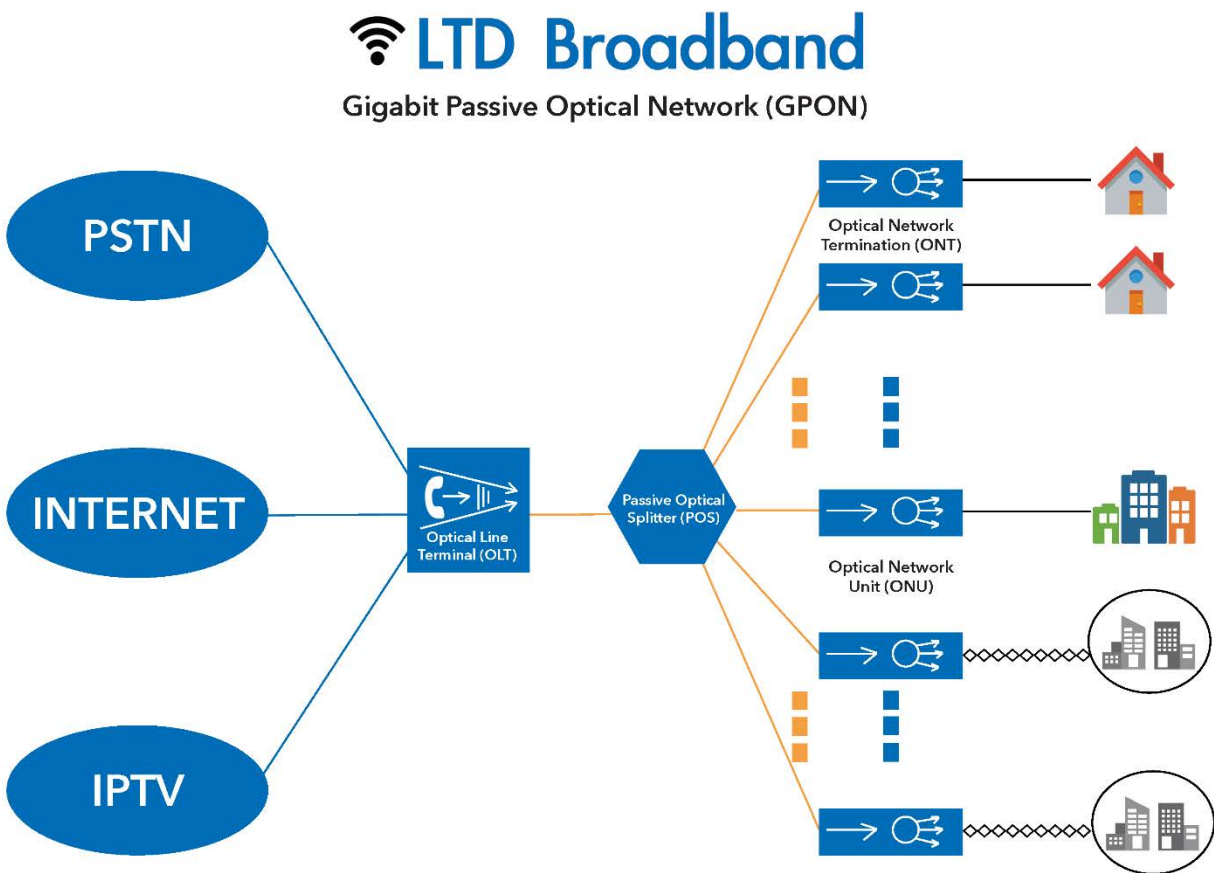
The service delivered is symmetrical and dedicated no matter what the speed option is by the customer by utilizing:

Gigabit Ethernet Passive Optical Network (GPON).

GPON fiber separates data, voice, and video into three different logical networks, and as a result, can provide a higher level of service quality for each type of communication. GPON technology is inherently secure due to the isolated nature of the signals within the optic fibers as they travel in a closed circuit and include encryption. In addition, GPON in either heavy or light fiber optic traffic will manage traffic up to 10/10 Gbs per subscriber and can upgraded to evolve with technology. With LTD's configuration GPON technology always delivers a minimum

bandwidth, so regardless of traffic load, subscribers can always access and send information with ease. Within the Optical Data Network (ODN), traffic is managed with substantial upstream bandwidth to avoid congestion and prevent connectivity glitches.

NETWORK DIAGRAM



AFFORDABILITY

LTD Broadband prides itself with the ability to provide a flexible, dependable, affordable service for all its municipal, commercial, and residential customers., LTD currently has over 700 subscribers using their FTTH solution, and the count is increasing daily. LTD offers a mix of Fiber and Fixed Wireless depending on the need and environment where the subscriber is based. Today, we compete with cable companies that offer bundled services, i.e., TV, Internet, and VoIP, by providing the same or better high speeds and service options at a higher quality of service with a lower rate.

LTD PROPOSED CUSTOMER RATE PLANS

| Business Rate Plans | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Speeds | Amount |
| 200/200 Mbps | \$95 per month |
| 500/500 Mbps | \$115 per month |
| 1000/1000 Mbps | \$145 per month |

| Residential Rate Plans | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| Speeds | Amount |
| 100/100 Mbps | \$70 per month |
| 200/200 Mbps | \$80 per month |
| 500/500 Mbps | \$100 per month |
| 1000/500 Mbps | \$130 per month |

Also Includes: *In-Home Network (IHN) FREE*
Dedicated Support Line
Dynamic IP Address Included

Includes: *IHN FREE*

SPECIAL PRICING

LTD is currently participating and is committed to continuing to work with Federal and Local programs for those homes and businesses to integrate affordably to the Marathon County and LTD Solution. Providing special pricing for those unable to afford the services that will add to their quality of life and well being

Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBB)

The Federally sponsored EBB program ended on December 31, 2021, is currently in a 60-day transition of the current, fully enrolled. EBB participants. The change started on January 1, 2022, to the **Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)**. ACP is an FCC benefit program passed by the US Congress on November 15, 2021, as part of the **Infrastructure Act**, to become law that

establishes a long-term solution for eligible Households with a discount on broadband services and connected devices. The ACP started accepting new applications on December 31, 2021, with the following criterion:

- a. A household is eligible if a member of the household meets at least *one* of the criteria below:
 - Has an income that is at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines; or
 - Participates in specific assistance programs, such as SNAP, Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, SSI, WIC, or Lifeline;
 - Participates in Tribal specific programs, such as Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, Tribal TANF, or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations.
 - Is approved to receive benefits under the free and reduced-price school lunch program or the school breakfast program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision in the 2019-2020, 2020-2021, or 2021-2022 school year.
 - Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year; or
 - Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income program.

LIFELINE PROGRAM

The Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) administer the Federally sponsored Lifeline Program. USAC is responsible for data collection and maintenance, support calculation, and disbursement for this low-income program with the following criterion:

- b. A household is eligible if a member of the household meets at least *one* of the criteria below:
 - Income at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
 - Medicaid
 - Federal Public Housing Assistance
 - Tribal-specific programs: Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, Tribally Administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TTANF), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), Head Start
 - Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit Program

TIMELINE FOR PROJECT

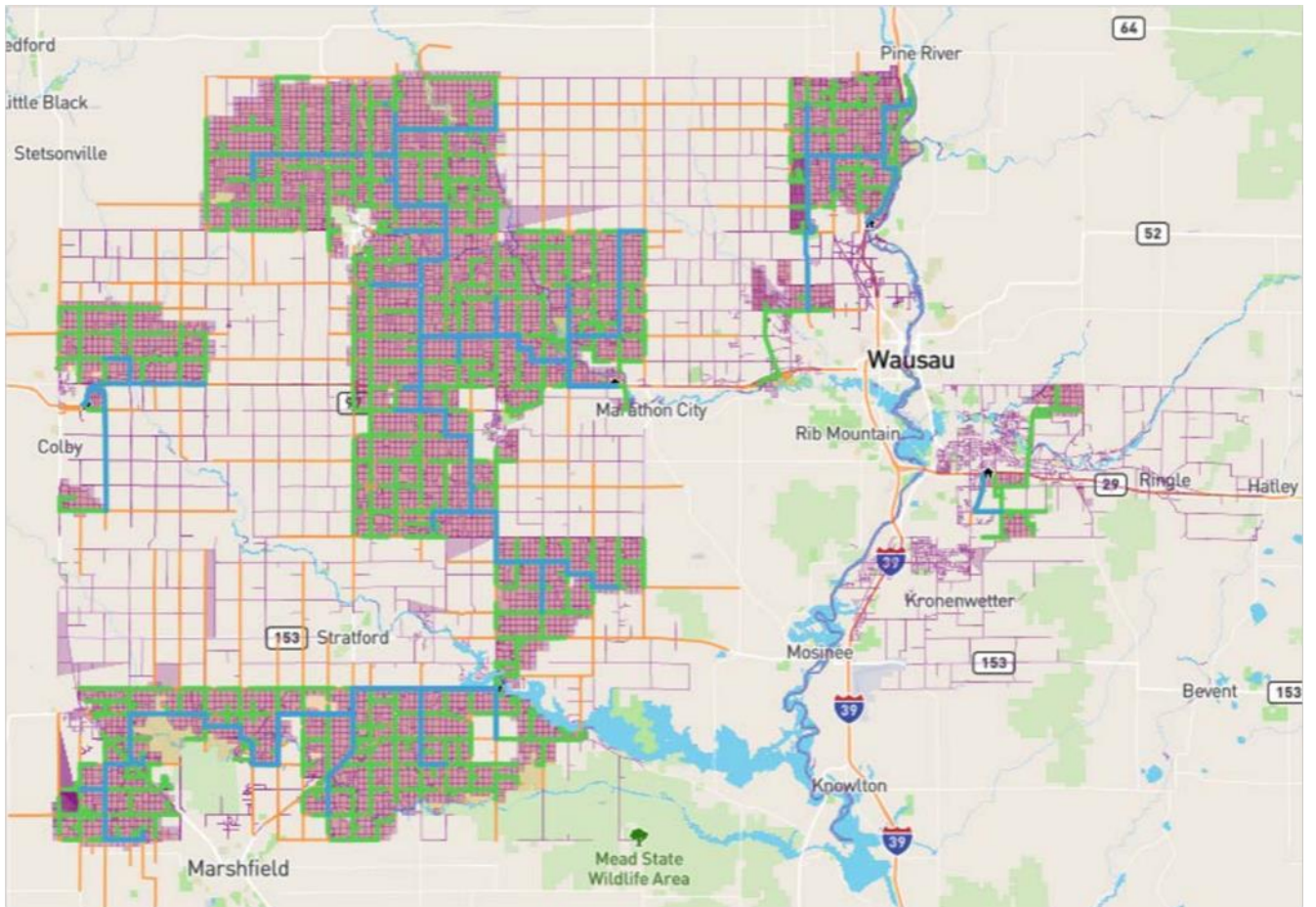
LTD Broadband intends to complete the core components of the proposed project in this application before or by December 31, 2024.

Construction Start Date: LTD is already collaborating and planning if we are chosen to complete the application process and awarded the grant. For this reason, we expect the start date to occur only days after the official award occurs.

- Months 1-6
 - LTD will work with the County to provide a streamlined process for finalizing land arrangements, acquisitions, or leases as required per site.
 - Initiate requests to schedule any required county, township, village, or city board meetings.
 - Verify and satisfy any environmental or FCC requirements.
 - Permitting will co-inside with the above.
 - Work with Marathon County and other local service groups to communicate marketing materials and timelines.
 - Equipment manufacturing and enclosures will be scheduled for production
 - Network designs will be finalized.
 - Weather and agreements permitting, installation of equipment on leased sites will commence.
 - Network adjustments as required.
- Months 3-10
 - Finalize, if any, land issues and /or lease agreements.
 - Structure and equipment acquisitions.
 - Begin construction of rate center sites.
- Month 6-12
 - Solidify, rate centers, towers, and site preparation work finalized.

- Collaborative marketing efforts begin with municipalities, service groups, cooperatives, and media as appropriate.
- Months 6-18
 - Site equipment installation and testing on all rate centers sites as available
 - Verify coverage maps.
- Months 6-24
 - Continue rollout of Fiber conduit, rate center sites, and customer premise equipment.
 - Identify coverage trouble areas and adjust as required.

Service availability will be rolled out over time, and the portions of Marathon County's residents will be experiencing 1G x 1G service within the first 180 days of the grant award.



| Network Design | |
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| Network Design | |
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PSC Evaluation Criteria

- **Match (10 points):** An application will receive credit based on the percentage of matching funds the applicant proposes to invest in its project and the variety of sources of matching funding provided by others.
- **Public-Private Partnership (10 points):** An application proposing to build a broadband facility in partnership with a city, village, town, or county government will receive priority credit.
- **Unserved Areas (15 points):** An application proposing to build or extend broadband service to an area with existing service less than 5 Mbps down and 500 Kbps up shall receive priority credit.
- **Project Impact (15 points):** An application that proposes to serve a comparatively larger geographic area, a larger number of customers or communities in an area, or provide a higher level of performance or service quality, shall receive priority credit.
- **Scalability (5 points):** An application that demonstrates a commitment to increase the size or scope of its broadband network in the future shall receive priority credit.
- **Economic Development (10 points):** An application that demonstrates the potential to promote job growth or retention, expand the property tax base or improve the overall economic vitality of the municipality or region shall receive priority credit.
- **Effect upon Broadband Service to Adjacent Areas (5 points):** An application that demonstrates that it will not impair the ability of a competing broadband service provider to extend broadband service to areas adjacent to the proposed project area shall receive priority credit.