MARATHON COUNTY
BROADBAND TASK FORCE MEETING
AGENDA

Date & Time of Meeting: **Monday, February 28, 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.

Phone #: 1-408-418-9388 Access Code: 2485 076 3886

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 February 21, 2022 Broadband Task Force Meeting Minutes**
4. **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
5. **Next Steps**
6. **Next Meeting: March 28, 2022**
7. **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: T. Ranallo
Date/Time: 2/25/2022 at 12pm

NOTICE POSTED AT COURTHOUSE
BY: T. Ranallo
Date/Time: 2/25/2022 at 12pm

MARATHON COUNTY
BROADBAND TASK FORCE MEETING
Minutes
Monday, February 21, 2022 at 3:00 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		x
Andy Faust	W	

Also Present: Gerry Klein, Valerie Carrillo, Noor Ali Hassan, Kathy Johnson
VIA Web or Phone: Kurt Gibbs, Eric Budleski, Lance Leonhard, Randy Fifrick, Scott Nyman, Jean Maszk**,** Jason Hausler, Tony Omernik, Sarah Dowiat

1. Call Meeting to Order: Chair Robinson called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.
2. Public Comments (15 Minute limit) - Tony Omernik - Restlawn Road, Wausau. Expressed concerns about availability of quality Broadband and ISP providers available to him. Currently has Frontier Internet and the service has been spotty. Pricing concerns were also expressed.

3. **MOTION BY LAGENHAHN; SECOND BY CIHLAR TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 24, 2022 BROADBAND TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES. MOTION CARRIED.**

4. **Educational Presentations and Committee Discussion:**
   - **A.** Update on RDOF progress

Discussion: Chairman Robinson stated that the RDOF is not at the final stage of approval but there is reason for optimism. They have until 2030 to complete the install.

B. Update on NTIA Grant Application

Discussion: They have received a number of grant applications at this time.

C. Discussion of Other Funding Opportunities

Discussion: This will be discussed with the PSC grant application. There are still items that need to be clarified.

D. Update on ISP Initiatives

Discussion: Communication has been happening from Marathon County to school districts, and the community at large. Both fixed and wireless test connections have been conducted using the GeoPartners speed test process. Results show a good initial first response, but it was suggested that there be a second communication in the future. Chair Robinson gave an update on a document he shared with the great prosperity partnerships on the work of the task force.

5. **Policy Discussion And Possible Action:**
   - **A.** Review and Recommend Partnerships for the Wisconsin PSC's Broadband Access
     1. Determine Criteria for evaluation of requests-Charter, Frontier, Bug Tussel, LTD,Cirrinity have sent proposals.
     2. Determine role of Marathon County and expectations of other parties including local governments
     3. Identify steps to support the applications

Discussion: Noor shared that applications have been received from LTD, Frontier, Cirrinity, Charter, and Bug Tussel, (5 total have been received). Some applications have been submitted for larger areas as well as smaller areas.

Information was still coming in last Friday and are still waiting for some more at the time of this meeting. Just over 5 million have been requested through these applications from the county. Currently, there is around $114,000 in the county budget to support applications that have come in.

Chair Robinson and Noor outlined what the PSC criteria is for grant applications to inform the task force as they consider the five proposals that have come in. Chair Robinson stated that all applications have exceeded the core baseline outlined by the task force for requested service minimums, most exceeding or near 1gb speeds.

Gerry Klein shared some thoughts about the proposals and mentioned some overlap of the projects and encouraged the committee to consider proposals that do not overlap each other. Charter does not overlap.

Supervisor Guild asked a clarification question about where funds are coming from and Chair Robinson stated that he has spoken with Board Chair Gibbs and how those funding requests could be forwarded out to other standing committees. Chair Robison mentioned that the county has 26.3 million in ARPA dollars, which includes Broadband, but there are alot of needs and competition for ARPA dollars.

Chair Robinson suggested that the group prioritize or recommend projects through this meeting. Chair Robinson stated that conversations were had with both the Eastern and Western Towns Associations about assisting with funding. Supervisor Guild expressed concerns about picking winners and losers but rather seeking other partners (towns, etc.) to support these projects and strengthen their consideration at the PSC level.

Milt Olson wondered if the towns had been sent letters at this time. It was confirmed that they have not, due to not knowing where the ISPs currently serve. It is possible to do this now for an ask and forms of support. Supervisor Guild feels Cirrinity would be easy to move forward with and wonders if we can ask IPS's identify additional partners for support. Jon Euting shared the evaluation criteria from his perspective. Scott (Cirrinity) stated their grants are based around the evaluation expectations with the goal of getting all the required evaluation points. They use the grants to tell a story. Chair Robinson suggested that if all proposals were funded, most needs would be met for Marathon County.

Gerry Klein added that Bug Tussel would also need to finish their current installation. Valerie Carrillo suggested that all proposals are accepted and then look at final funding. Sandy Cihlar asked for elaboration on borrowing of funds. Chair Robinson mentioned a couple of potential options and there is not a current clarification of available LTD dollars. Board Chair Gibbs feels there will be more requests than available funds and better partnering with the ISPs needs to happen. He suggested the need to run each proposal through the criteria evaluation process before making a final determination or ranking. Chair Robinson asked if the state criteria should be used again. He feels that at this point, additional information is needed regarding the proposals. Supervisor Budleski feels that Cirrinity has value due to their history record and is ready to move forward. He is not comfortable with the larger corporations. Chair Robinson noted that there seems to be consensus regarding Cirrinity and asked if the task force can take a few days to get clarity from the rest of the ISPs and meet again next week.

Milt Olson inquired about the ARPA funds for Marathon County for 2022. Chair Robinson stated there is a specific process and request for that funding. Supervisor Gibbs added that all ARPA fund requests have criteria requirements and are presented to a committee. He also noted that Cirrinity is the least expensive request per resident served and that Frontier is the next least expensive. He recommended having a clear idea of what information is needed to make informed decisions moving forward.

Supervisor Guild wondered what the downside is to bringing proposals that cover the same area. Chair Robinson stated that the PSC allows people (businesses) to object to grants, typically stating they already serve that specific area. Chair Robinson presented a list of items to evaluate with ISPs this week. Gerry Klein will work with the maps to see if an overlap of coverage can be easily presented. Suggestions were made for various additions to the current proposals.

MOTION TO MOVE FORWARD WITH CIRRINITY MADE BY BUDLESKI, SECOND BY CIHLAR.
Discussion: Chair Robinson stated in the act of fairness, the evaluation criteria should be applied to all proposals. Supervisor Lagenhahn would like to do all the ranking at once in order to provide fairness and transparency.
MOTION RESCINDED BY BUDLESKI AND CIHLAR

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

- Tabled to next meeting

6. Next Meeting Topics
    1. Potential Legislative Changes that Could Expand Access to Internet Services
    2. Review ISP proposals
7. Next Meeting: Feb 28, 2022 3:00 pm
8. Adjournment

    LAGENHAHN MOTION TO ADJOURN MEETING, OLSON SECOND. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. MEETING ADJOURNED AT 4:42pm.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Kathy Johnson

Marathon County 2022 PSC Broadband Expansion Grant Request

Company	Area served	Residences & Business Served	Project Costs	PSC Request	Company investment	Request from County	Other Match	Speed	Type of service	Miles	Contact	Affordable Connectivity Program	Completion	County % of Costs	Project cost/unit	Co. Share/unit	Co. Subsidy at $190/unit	Co. Subsity at $235/unit	Would you accept a loan? (low or no interest)
Cirrinity	Reid and Bevent	368	$1,669,500	$1,001,700	$527,800	$70,000	$70,000 Town of Reid	1 Gigabit	FTTP	39.75 miles	Scott Nyman	Yes	Fall 2022	4.2	$4,537	$190	$69,920	$86,480	Yes
LTD	LTD's RDOF Area	4,250	$13,906,614.47	$6,953,307.23	$5,284,513.50	$1,668,793.74	N/A	1 Gigabit	FTTH	N/A	Kimberly Young	Yes	Fall 2024	12	$3,272	$393	$807,500	$998,750	Yes
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	N/A	1 Gigabit	FTTH	100 miles	Steve Schneider	No - Have their own program but open to applying for other programs at the County's request	End of 2024	25	$9,917	$2,479	$114,950	$142,175	Yes - but would require to increase the loan amount to the full cost of the project not funded by the PSC grant
Frontier	Northeast, Southeast, and Southwest Marathon County	4,024	$9,448,352	$3,799,341	$4,724,176	$944,835	N/A	1 Gigabit	FTTH	487 miles	Scott Bohler	Yes	2 years from the date the application is approved	10	$2,348	$235	$764,560	$945,640	No
Charter	Nuterville, Harrison, and Kronenwetter	232	$3,890,304	$2,058,304	$232,000	$1,600,000	N/A	1000/500 Mbps.	FTTP	TBD	Celeste Flynn	Yes	2 years from from the date of the Comission's final approval	41.1	$16,769	$6,897	$44,080	$54,520	Yes
	Totals	$9,479	$34,914,770	$14,734,348	$12,036,490	$5,783,629	$70,000			627				16.6	$3,683	$3,700	$1,801,010	$2,227,565	
	Average		$3,683	$1,554	$1,270	$610										$0	$0	$0	

Past Grants																			
Cirrinity 2020	Hatley Reid	88	360,147	125,985	100,000	72,275	15,000		FTTP					20.1	$4,093	$821			
Cirrinity 2021	Town of Norrie and Mayflower Lake	99	275,985	150,000	62,982	62,983			FTTP					22.8	$2,788	$636			
		187	636,132	275,985	162,982	135,258	15,000	0											

Bug Tussel

Good Afternoon Noir –

I am available this Thursday at 12:30p, please send a meeting invitation so that I can reserve the space on my calendar.

As to you questions:

1. We would consider doing a low or no interest loan from the County instead of a grant. In the event that is how the County would like to proceed, we would propose to increase the loan amount to $3,000,000 (the full cost of the project not funded by the PSC grant).

2. We have discussed funding last-mile fiber projects with several other funding partners, though those conversations have not addressed specific projects and have not materialized beyond initial conversations. In the event Marathon County selects this project to proceed, we would have further discussions with the Village of Kronenwetter, the Town of Knowlton, and the Town of Guenther about contributing to the project for the purpose of having additional funding sources in the eyes of the PSC.

3. We have had several discussions with Cirrinity regarding their proposed project areas, including the project they submitted relative to this RFP. The project area in our proposal was designed with Cirrinity's plans in mind.

4. This project would be the first last-mile expansion project off the middle mile loop that we are installing throughout Marathon County. We would be able to scale this project to other areas along the middle-mile route, with a network design similar to the one shown by this project.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions or concerns. If not, I look forward to speaking with you on Thursday.

Thanks!

Mitchel L. Olson

Charter

Please find the answers to your questions. Thank you for your patience.

1) Would you consider a low or no interest loan from the County instead of a grant? Yes

2) Have you approached other potential funding partners such as the Towns of Harrison and Easton? What were the results of those efforts? – An application with a variety of partners and sources of matching funding would receive higher scores – We have not but we agree with you and would be happy to reach out to the Towns.

3) What efforts have you taken to minimize overlap of services with other Internet Service Providers? Would your proposed areas impair the ability of a competing broadband service provider to extend broadband service to areas adjacent to the proposed project? Our grant requests seek to avoid overbuilding existing served territory, relying on mapping information from the FCC, the state of Wisconsin, and when available, our own research. We are not aware of any characteristic of our proposal that would impair the ability of any competing provider to extend service to areas adjacent to the proposed project.

4) Is this project scalable and will it allow for expanded services in adjoining areas in the future? Charter's commitment to build RDOF will bring scalability to this project.

5) What is Charter's share/investment to this project? $232,000

6) What is the timeline and estimated completion date for this project? We will build it within the timeline provided by the Commission. I believe the deadline is twenty-four months from the date of the Commission's final order.

7) Will an affordable connectivity program be available – Yes, as well as the other affordability programs Spectrum provides today.

8) please provide more detail, including but not limited to middle mile costs vs. fiber to the premise costs – The cost we provided will bring FTTP service to 232 locations. Standard installation cost of about $50 would apply if the resident wanted to sign up for service and then of course the cost of the package the sign up for.

Thank you Noor.

Here are our responses:

1. Yes we would consider a low interest loan from the County in all our builds not just this proposed project.
2. We have worked with and received commitment of $70,000 from the Town of Reid. Our intentions are also to reach out to Marshfield Clinic again as they have partnered and matched in previous rounds. I have emailed them and am awaiting response.
3. I have worked with Mitch Olson, Mark Dodge, and Steve Schneider with Bug Tussel to ensure we are not overlapping and in reality this project will only help them and us in increasing our fiber counts through the area. Our goal is not to impair competition but to bolster it as with the movement of customers off of Frontiers network and onto our network, we have been told can increase their capacity and ability to serve other residents that may have been on a waiting list while waiting for Frontier to upgrade facilities.
4. This project is fully scalable and will allow us to branch out as we have with previous grant awards in this area.

Let me know if you need anything else or want me to expand on any response.

Scott Nyman
CEO Cirrinity

From the time we sent in that proposal until now, Wisconsin released updated maps showing unserved and underserved areas that are eligible to apply for grant funding. In order to submit an application for this grant I'll have to redo the mapping and everything will change. I'm hoping I can get that done ASAP but will not have all the details to share with you yet tomorrow.

To answer some of your questions below we would be interested in a low or no interest grant from the County.

As far as other funding partners we are funding our project and applying for grants.

When it comes to overlapping services of other providers we are typically installing fiber in areas that remain unserved or underserved where there isn't sufficient coverage existing. We don't look to duplicate funding in another RDOF participants area as there's so many areas that remain unserved or underserved we would rather focus on those.

This project is absolutely scalable and we could build adjacent and adjoining areas in the future.

While we did receive the winning bid in the RDOF auction the application is not approved by the FCC. Our long form is submitted and we have satisfied all the requirements necessary and have no doubt tit will be awarded but it's a waiting process with the FCC. There were 417 successful bidders and the first areas for Charter (another large winner like LTD) were only awarded in two states this month. We expect the FCC to keep getting through the list of 417 awardees at a rapid clip and are excited that we could be funded soon.

Any grant we would apply for would be independent of RDOF and we could still install if for some unforeseen reason it was not successful.

This grant would compliment RDOF as we would already be in the area but we are really just focusing on installing unserved and underserved areas. The PSC grant and county match would be used to help fund building the underserved and unserved areas and based on the new mapping released by the PSC of Wisconsin there's very little of our RDOF territory included in that footprint.

Haley Tollefson

RESOLUTION #R-__-22

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE BROADBAND PERMIT FEE STRUCTURE

WHEREAS, Marathon County has existing policies and fee structures relative to the process for burying and maintaining utility lines within the public right-of-way of a county trunk highway; and

WHEREAS, Marathon County's existing policies do not include a dedicated process or fee structure for the laying of fiber for broadband services within a public right-of-way; and

WHEREAS, Marathon County desires to expand broadband services within the County, including to unserved and underserved areas; and

WHEREAS, the Marathon County Broadband Task Force and Infrastructure Committee have determined that a permitting process and fee structure for the laying of fiber for broadband services would create a framework through which broadband expansion efforts could be encouraged; and

WHEREAS, the Marathon County Broadband Task Force and infrastructure Committee have recommended that a permitting process and fee structure for the laying of fiber for broadband services including the following provisions:

> For utility providers seeking to lay or bury fiber for broadband services within the public right-of-way of a county trunk highway, the Marathon County Highway Department shall require payment of a $175 permit fee. This $175 permit fee shall be paid by the utility provider for each township within which an individual broadband-related fiber project requires a utility accommodation within the public right-of-way of a county trunk highway. The $175 permit fee shall apply for all Highway Department inspection time required within that particular township up to one (1) hour of inspection time. If an individual broadband-related fiber project requires more than one (1) hour of Highway Department inspection time within a particular township, the Highway Department shall track and charge to the utility provider the actual costs associated with all inspection time over one hour. Marathon County may seek reimbursement of costs for inspection time over one hour per township through the use of American Rescue Plan Act or Capital Improvement Project funds, if those funds are available and obtainable by the County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Marathon does hereby ordain to adopt the following fee structure for utility providers seeking to lay or bury fiber for broadband services within the public right-of-way of a county trunk highway:

> For utility providers seeking to lay or bury fiber for broadband services within the public right-of-way of a county trunk highway, the Marathon County Highway Department shall require payment of a $175 permit fee. This $175 permit fee shall be paid by the utility provider for each township within which an individual broadband-related fiber project requires a utility accommodation within the public right-of-way of a county trunk highway. The $175 permit fee shall apply for all Highway Department inspection time required within that particular township up to one (1) hour of inspection time. If an individual broadband-related fiber project requires more than one (1) hour of Highway Department inspection time within a particular township, the Highway Department shall track and charge to the utility provider the actual costs associated with all inspection time over one hour. Marathon County may seek reimbursement of costs for inspection time over one hour per township through the use of American Rescue Plan Act or Capital Improvement Project funds, if those funds are available and obtainable by the County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Marathon County Highway Commissioner shall implement the above fee structure and adopt any required operational policies necessary to implement said fee structure.

Dated the_____day of_____, 2022.

INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

_____

Fiscal Impact: None. This permitting process creates a new permitting fee applicable per township to utilities laying fiber for broadband expansion within the County. This fee may create additional county revenues.

Average Download Speed 2/27/2022

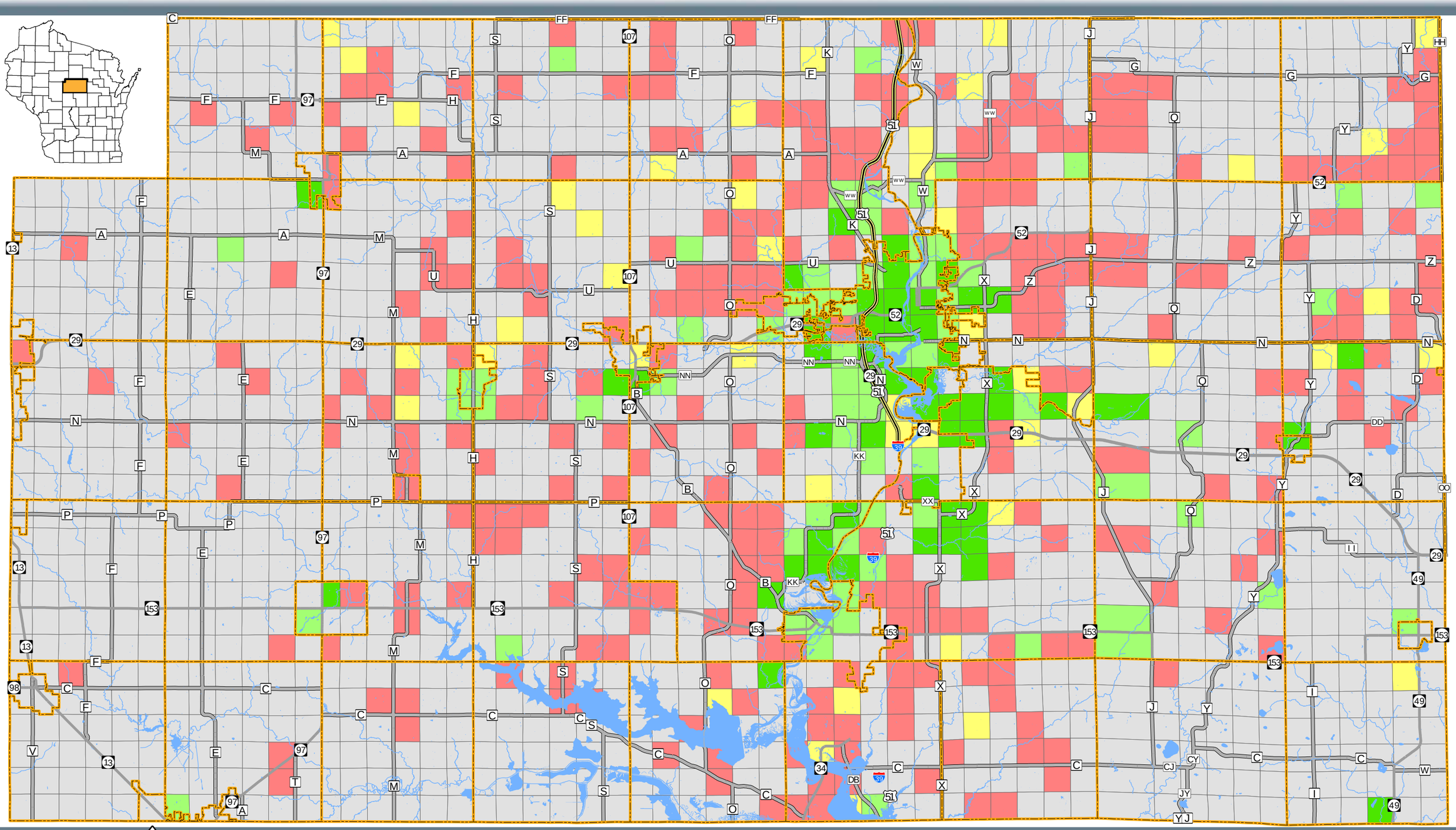
Marathon County, Wisconsin

Legend

- US Highway
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Minor Civil Divisions
- Water

Average Download Speeds

- < 25 MB
- 25 to 50 MB
- 50 to 100 MB
- > 100 MB
- No Test or Service



NORTH

0 1.25 2.5 5 7.5 10 Miles

This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey of the actual boundary of any property depicted. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.

Preparded By:
North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
210 McClellan St. Wausau, WI 54403 - www.ncwrpc.org

Date Printed: Sunday, February 27, 2022

Average Upload Speed 2/27/2022

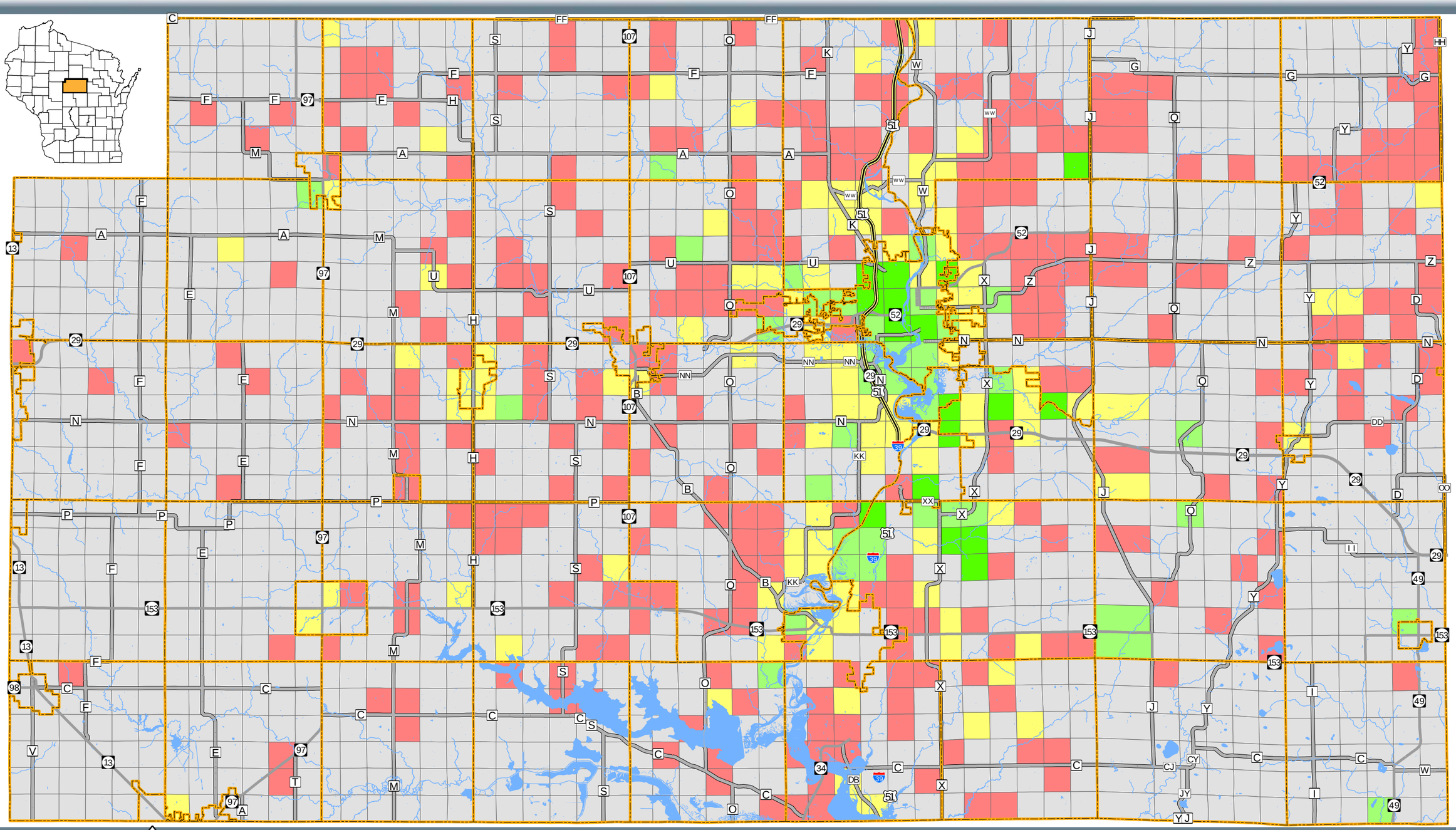
Marathon County, Wisconsin

Legend

- US Highway
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Minor Civil Divisions
- Water

Average Upload Speeds

- No test or Service
- < 5 MB
- 5 to 20 MB
- 20 to 100 MB
- > 100 MB



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Date Printed: Sunday, February 27, 2022

Number of Speedtests 2/27/2022

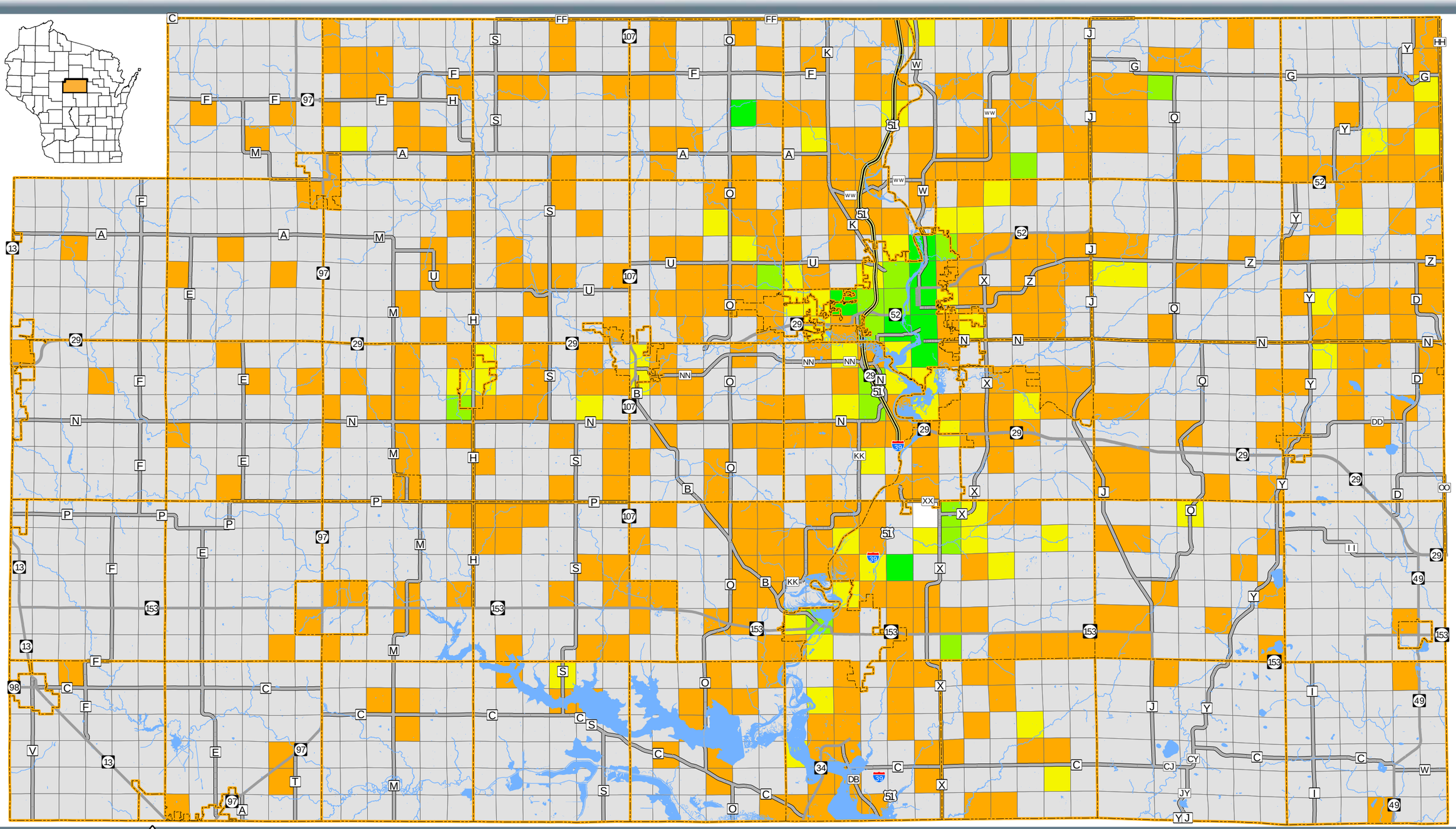
Marathon County, Wisconsin

Legend

- US Highway
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Minor Civil Divisions
- Water

Total Tests

- 0
- 1 - 4
- 5 - 10
- 11 - 20
- 21 - 63



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Marathon County

Households	57,707
Population	134,063
Test locations	1,157
Total Tests	1,588
Percent participation	2.00%
Participation goal (10%)	5,771

Download

• No Service	53	4.6%
•0-10 Mbps	326	28.2%
•10-25 Mbps	225	19.4%
•25-150 Mbps	372	32.2%
•150+ Mbps	181	15.6%

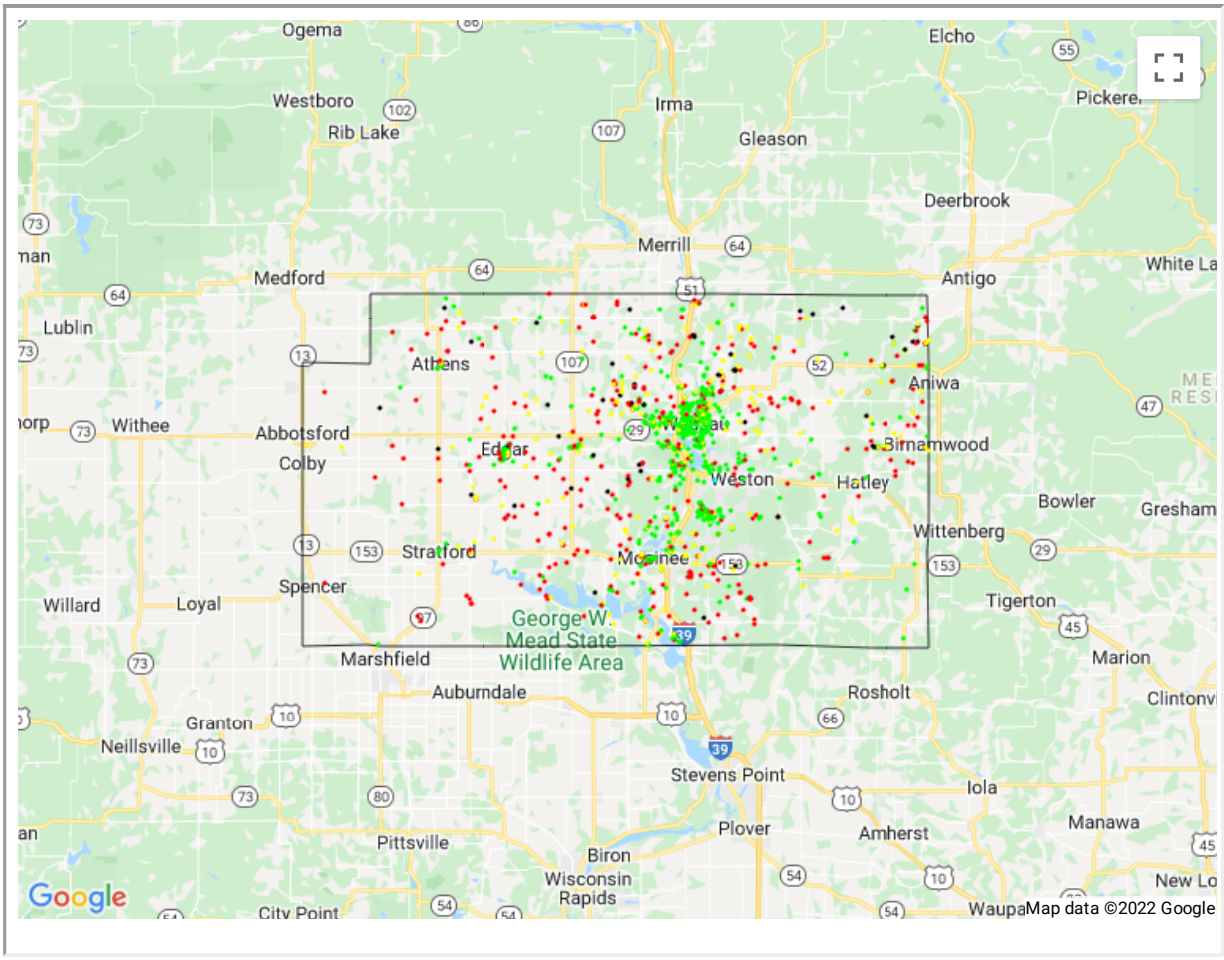
Upload

No Service	53	4.6%
<3 Mbps	385	33.3%
3-10 Mbps	298	25.8%
10-25 Mbps	274	23.7%
25-150 Mbps	84	7.3%
> 150 Mbps	63	5.4%

	Min	Max	Med Mbps
Download	0.01	607.24	25.06
Upload	0.01	918.52	6.01

No service reasons: may total>100%

Not Available	100.00%
Too Expensive	8.70%
Physical Issues	2.17%
No Computer	2.17%
Don`t Know How Computer	2.17%



Fixed 1,021 locations

Download			Upload		
No Service	53	5.2%	No Service	53	5.2%
0-10 Mbps	259	25.4%	<3 Mbps	328	32.1%
10-25 Mbps	199	19.5%	3-10 Mbps	238	23.3%
25-150 Mbps	331	32.4%	10-25 Mbps	259	25.4%
150+ Mbps	179	17.5%	25-150 Mbps	80	7.8%
			> 150 Mbps	63	6.2%

Cellular 136 locations

Download			Upload		
0-10 Mbps	67	49.3%	<3 Mbps	57	41.9%
10-25 Mbps	26	19.1%	3-10 Mbps	60	44.1%
25-150 Mbps	41	30.1%	10-25 Mbps	15	11.0%
150+ Mbps	2	1.5%	25-150 Mbps	4	2.9%
			> 150 Mbps	0	0.0%