# Dane County Broadband Task Force

July 2022

Report to the Dane County Board of Supervisors

# Membership

- Andrew Hoyos
- Bill Dickmeyer
- Bob Wipperfurth
- Cathy Sutter
- Dave Ripp
- Deana Zentner
- James Danky
- Joyce Tikalsky
- Kate McGinnity
- Melissa Ratcliff
- Michelle Jensen
- Peter Weil
- Renee Lauber
- Sarah Ghee
- Todd Violante

https://youtu.be/zTnEKzvP_Lw

# Outreach

Survey – Survey mailed to sample population, online collector available as well

Encouraged participation in the MadRep Speed Test

Public hearings – February 28th and March 4th

Broadband Task Force website
https://board.countyofdane.com/initiatives/Broadband-Task-Force

Social Media

Press Releases

# Survey Results

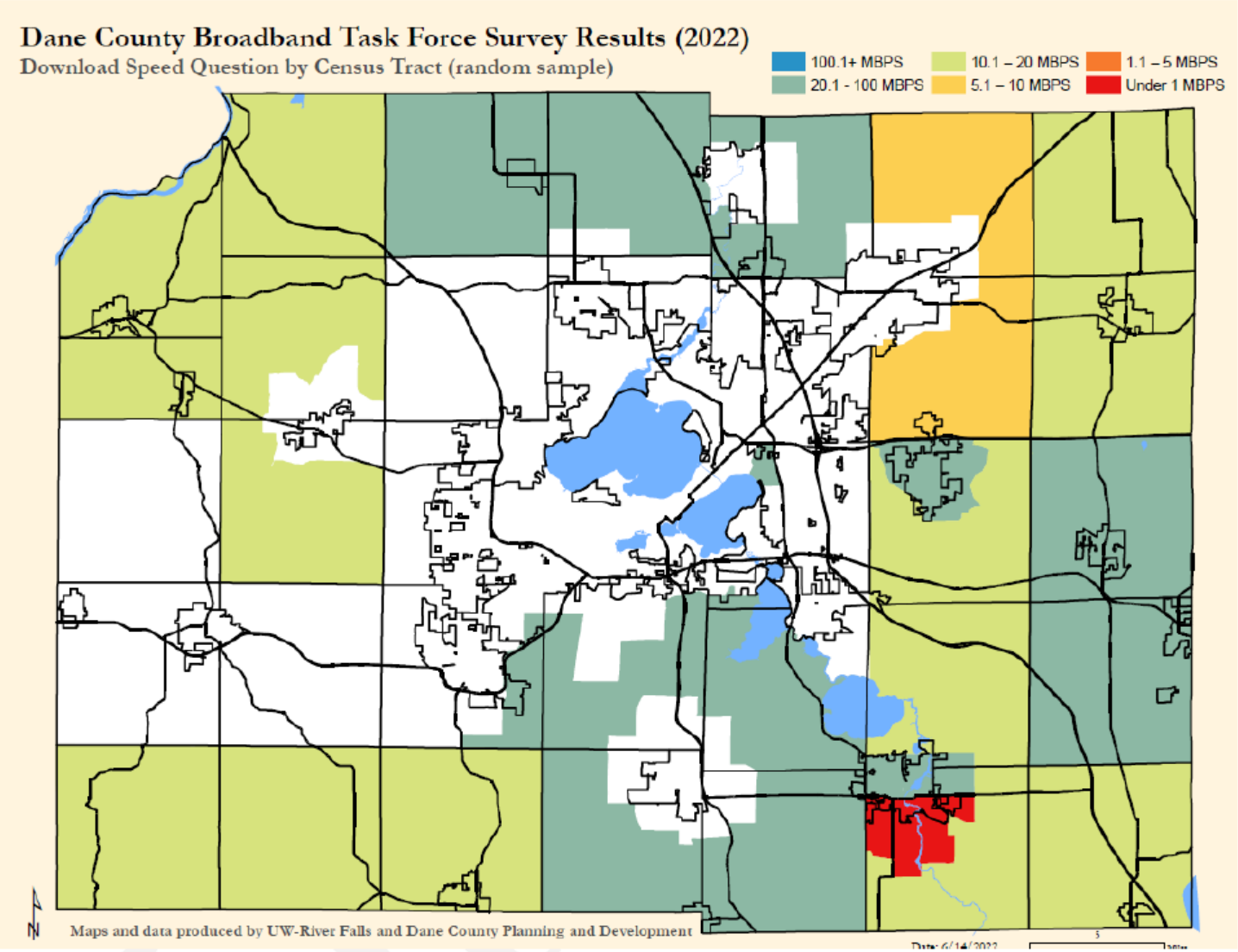
- 821 mailed surveys completed
- Approximately 2,000 online surveys completed

Broadband is currently defined as at least 25 Mbps (transfer of "megabits per second") of download speed and at least 3 Mbps of upload speed (Federal Communication Commission-FCC).

Survey results conclude:

- About 40% of survey responses from the statistically representative survey report download speeds of 20 Mbps or less
- Another 40% report upload speeds of less than 5 Mbps

# Survey Results




*Map from UW River Falls Dane County Broadband Survey Report – produced by UW River Falls and Dane County Planning Development Department*

# Recommendations

## Internet service provider collaboration and infrastructure criteria

**1.** Hire a Broadband Coordinator
**2.** Work with the ISPs to complete the last mile and fill in gaps
**3.** Fund work of laying middle mile infrastructure (dark fiber) in select rural areas during road construction
**4.** Recruit ISPs to lay fiber to premises in areas of greatest need; provide funding match
**5.** Provide incentives to ISP providers to create competition for them to better serve hard to reach areas
**6.** Develop criteria for larger providers to extend coverage beyond subdivisions to households in proximity (note: to prevent isolated households or areas from not receiving service where there is already fiber in proximity)
**7.** Consideration of cooperative structures to develop middle mile infrastructure
**8.** Establish a procedure and set criteria for evaluating and responding to external/private sector proposed partnerships for broadband expansion.
**9.** Research opportunities for County to own fiber; Can County own the fiber and lease it back to ISPs? (through MUFN)
**10.** Research whether it is possible to require that ISPs get a permit (and pay for it). County would benefit from having accurate understanding of where fiber is laid

# Recommendations

## Outreach, education, and alliance building

**1.** Conduct outreach efforts to municipalities about broadband
**2.** Engage with Public Health officials and entities to expand telehealth using social determinants of health framework
**3.** Advise towns and villages about broadband choices and costs: recommendation for fiber infrastructure
**4.** Identify contacts in surrounding Counties that are working on broadband expansion and establish relationship with them
**5.** Public Website: include what is available in your area: Fiber to premises, cell towers, etc. Share this information with constituents

# Recommendations

## Advocacy

1.Increase funding for the PSC Broadband Expansion Grant Program
2.Allocate State and County funding for staff positions dedicated to assisting municipalities with applying for grants
3.Conduct outreach and training programs geared toward helping municipalities get ready to apply for grants
4.Create accountability measures for internet service providers to:
a) submit speed data to the PSC on a regular basis,
b) provide granular service data to the PSC on scale smaller than census block,
c) provide advertised speeds to customers
5.Provide authority to the PSC to require, in grant applications, that ISPs provide internet coverage to unserved ‘neighbors’ when applying to serve a concentrated area (e.g., new developments). This would extend routes in less densely populated areas
6.Classify the internet as a public utility to improve the quality of service and ensure access for all; ISPs would be regulated
7.Change state law that restricts Counties and municipalities from serving as ISPs
8.Implement ‘dig once’ ordinance throughout the state

# Recommendations

## Interim methods to provide service

**1.** Lend devices (e.g., tablets) to those who cannot get access to ISP services (while building the network)
**2.** Share information about the new Federal Affordable Connectivity Program in Towns, Villages, Municipalities
**3.** Build a catalog of the names of people to contact in Dane County about public wi-fi access, connection credentials, and hours for indoor use
**4.** Test wifi and hotspot performance in Dane County at village centers and town halls to learn about reliability, speed, and distance limits; publicize these locations to public
**5.** Provide instructions to public for how to use smartphones as hotspots

# Recommendations

## Funding and research

1. Identify funding opportunities from State & Federal Govt.
2. Double up with grant opportunities for each project (combine resources from Dane County, PSC, Federal grants)

# Next Steps

Broadband Task Force will continue

Engineering assessment will be completed

# Questions?