Allegan County Broadband Action Workgroup
March 3, 2022
Minutes

CTO: 4:00pm
Present: Chair Marsman, Vice Chair Kotas, Siler* (v), Brown** (v), Williams, Beltman, *Siler left at 5:30pm, **Brown left at 5:06pm(V-attended through virtual link).
Public Participation: None
Presentations:
Sheri Culver and Chris Barber from Great Lakes Energy presented to the group (REF #2)

 Dunham: Can customers switch electric utility providers?
 Answer: No, but it's different for fiber
 Kotas: What is the barrier for customers to connect to passing lines?
 Answer: Full time vs seasonal residents; some areas have decent providers and change is difficult
 Kotas: What is the long term payback?
 Answer: 7-8 years; requires long term vision
 Beltman: How has the supply chain issues impacted existing projects?
 Answer: It's going well; laying 1,000 miles per year
 Williams: Is there a fee for the drop?
 Answer: Not for Great Lakes members
 Siler: What is your funding model?
 Answer: Subsidiary of Great Lakes Energy

Steve Shults from Bloomingdale Communications presented to the group (REF #3)

 Dunham: Pointed out cost projection and questioned why it was over budget
 Answer: Based on the timeline, this project was planned in 2019 pre-pandemic
 Dunham: Have you faced supply chain issues?
 Answer: We're doing what we can
 Marsman: What is the average cost per home?
 Answer: $5-12k per home

Communications: Chair Marsman shared a press release from the Executive Office of the Governor regarding a state-level project utilizing funds from the CARES Act to conduct a full accounting of the state's high-speed internet service to identify gaps and provide a clearer picture. (REF #1)
Minutes: The minutes of February 17 were circulated prior to the meeting and were approved.
Reports/Updates:
County Administrator Rob Sarro updated the workgroup on the administrative meeting held with the new project manager. Project Manager Jill Dunham told the work group that she has made significant progress on speaking with local government officials and has reached 16 Township Supervisors. Dunham is in the process of putting together a countywide information meeting for local governments.
Action items: Dan Wedge with Allegan County updated the workgroup regarding the County's NCS survey. The workgroup reviewed and discussed if the survey met the needs expressed. The scoring sheet was discussed and will be presented to the Board of Commissioners.
Local government meeting: The group discussed the local government meeting as proposed by Dunham. A tentative date was set of March 22 from 7-8:30. Details forthcoming.
Updates of Lee Township: Vice Chair Kotas said that Lee Township is expecting to receive the results of a feasibility study, with could lead to progress on a Pullman Project.

Update on Plainwell Industrial Park – Dunham said that it appears additional funds will not be needed at this time.

Public Participation:

Henry Reinhardt, Monterrey Township, thanked the workgroup,encouraged the workgroup to seek correct and accurate data.

Tim Carr, Fillmore Township, shared experience on speed tests.

Adjournment: On the motion of Williams, seconded by Beltman, the workgroup adjourned at 5:58pm.

REF #1

Governor Whitmer & Lt. Governor Gilchrist Announce Planning Project to Connect Michiganders to High-Speed Internet

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 28, 2022
Contact: Press@michigan.gov

Governor Whitmer & Lt. Governor Gilchrist Announce Planning Project to Connect Michiganders to High-Speed Internet

LANSING, Mich. - Governor Gretchen Whitmer and Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist II today announced that the state of Michigan has partnered with Connected Nation Michigan to lead the Broadband Infrastructure Audit and Validation project over the next six months. This project will utilize $5.2 million in federal CARES Act funding to conduct a full accounting of the state's high-speed internet service to identify gaps and provide a clearer picture as officials plan to significantly expand access through the bipartisan federal infrastructure funding.

"In today's society, the fastest way to create an even playing field and grow our economy is through affordable access to high-speed internet," said **Governor Gretchen Whitmer**. "When we make investments in this critical infrastructure, we can help businesses grow and lower costs for Michiganders to connect to the internet so they can go to school, access health care, participate in the economy, and more. This critical service is not a luxury - it is a necessity. Today's announcement will help us chart out how to efficiently expand high-speed internet access in communities across our state."

This effort will help identify and map the precise location of existing high-speed internet assets in the state and the areas where access to high-speed internet is absent along more than 65,000 miles of public right-of-way. Understanding where high-speed internet access and assets exist, and where there are gaps, will be critical in both securing and

prioritizing the $100 million in federal funding that is anticipated to be coming to Michigan for high-speed internet infrastructure buildout.

To address this disparity, the Michigan Strategic Fund approved up to $5.2 million from federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) funds to Connected Nation Michigan for the Broadband Infrastructure Audit and Validation project. The funds were allocated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) with the specific purpose of assisting with COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery. In addition, CDBG CARES funding should be used to fund eligible activities related to drive longer-term recovery and revitalization for low- and moderate-income individuals.

"Every person in Michigan must have access to fast, affordable, high-quality internet service where they live so that all of our communities can thrive," said **Lt. Governor Gilchrist**. "This effort will use a statewide, coordinated approach to gather information in every zip code that will enable us to increase internet access and adoption, and identify the resources we need to connect every household and business in every community in Michigan."

Access to high-speed internet is vital to people's ability to work, learn and carry out business.
While funded by the Michigan Strategic Fund, the Broadband Infrastructure Audit and Validation Project will be implemented in full partnership with the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) Michigan High-Speed Internet Office and complements the many requirements new federal programs will place on the office. States are required to identify all eligible locations for federal investments within their borders and this project will do just that. The sooner Michigan can identify these locations, the more efficient and accurate infrastructure plans can be, and the sooner funds can be administered for new network deployments.

"To lift more Michiganders up with equal opportunity and set Michigan up for economic prosperity, we need to remove barriers in high-speed internet availability, affordability and adoption that disproportionately impact communities of color and low-income households," said **LEO Director Susan Corbin**. "This once-in-a-generation investment will help provide the framework to eliminate the digital divide, remove barriers and implement programs that assist Michiganders with access and adoption of high-speed internet."

The Broadband Infrastructure Audit and Validation project will allow the state of Michigan, its CDBG program, communities, regions, and internet service providers to make informed decisions regarding the efficient expansion of high-speed internet

service throughout the state and better target its grant funding in a way that will result in productive high-speed internet expansion and support for Michigan.

In 2021, Governor Whitmer established the Michigan-High Speed Internet Office to help address the lack of high-speed internet that creates a barrier to online learning, healthcare and economic opportunity. MIHI will continue to convene and coordinate departments and agencies to further align and coordinate work being done related to high-speed internet access; serve as a single-point-of-contact for internet service providers, communities and local units of government, community anchor institutions, and individual Michiganders; and build awareness of state and federal resources and funding opportunities.

In 2020, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation partnered with Connected Nation Michigan to facilitate the Connecting Michigan Taskforce, an interagency working group to improve the access, adoption, and use of high-speed internet and technology across Michigan.

"High-speed internet is critical for success in today's world," said **Michigan Economic Development Corporation CEO and Michigan Strategic Fund President and Chair Quentin Messer Jr**. "We are committed to working alongside our private industry partners in this effort, realizing that by working together to tackle this statewide issue, collectively, we will generate greater economic impact in affording more of our 10 million plus friends and neighbors counting on us to get consistently reliable high-speed internet connectivity right across our great state."

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AGENDA

1 Background

2 Fiber Basics & Local Impact

3 Construction Plans

4 Service Options

5 Q&A

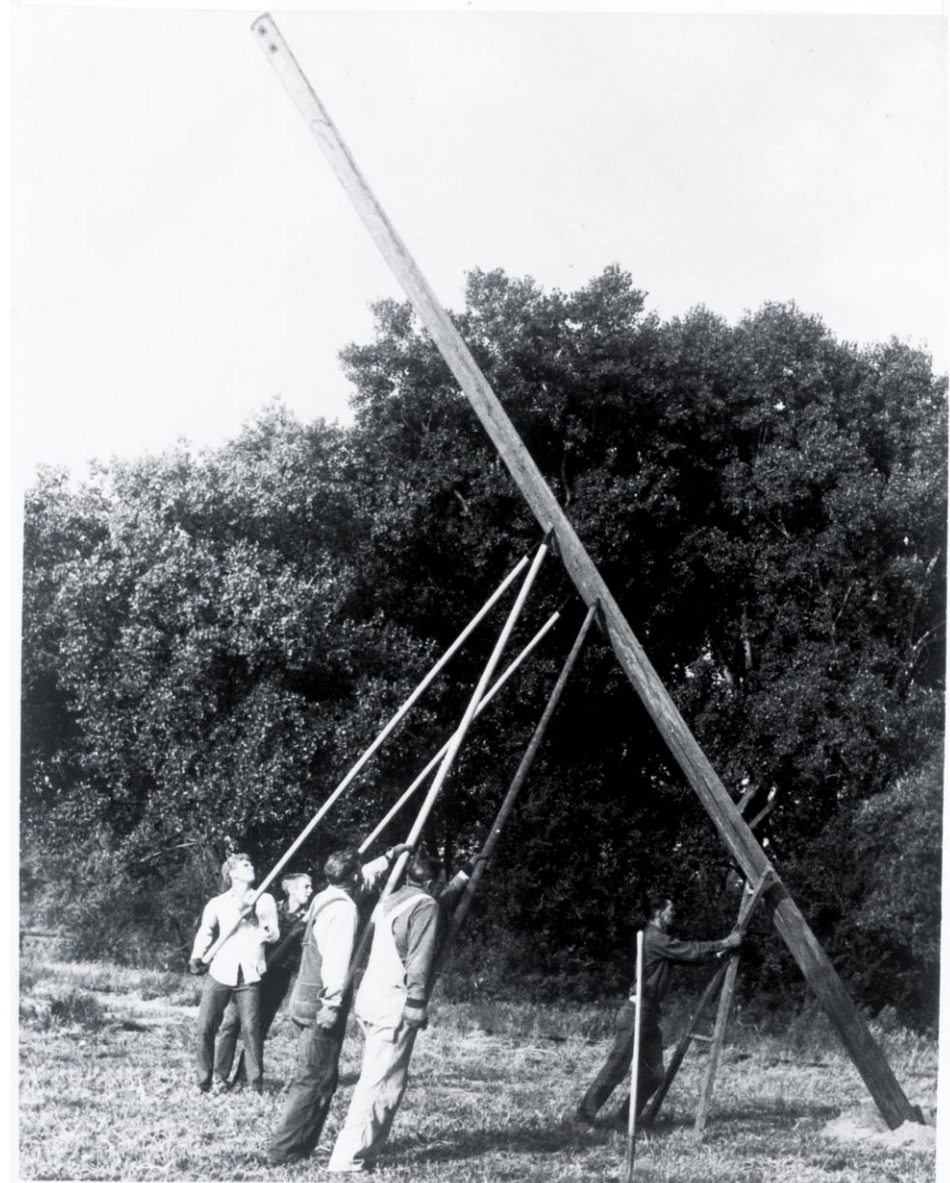truestream
powered by Great Lakes Energy

The Future Is Here

truestream
powered by Great Lakes Energy

Life-Changing Fiber Broadband for Rural Michigan

Electric Co-ops – Serving Where Others Won't

IT'S COMING—
ELECTRICITY
FOR YOU

What Is Truestream Fiber And Why Is It Better?

- Future-Proof
- No Data Caps
- No Contracts
- Symmetrical Upload/Download
- 100 Mbps-1 Gig Service
- Residential, Business, Vacation Plans
- Local, trusted company

Great Lakes Energy owns the fiber lines which are installed on the cooperative's powerlines.

Local Community/Business Impact

- Educational Opportunities
- Work from Home
- Business Growth and Expansion
- Home Values – Real Estate Sales
- Telemedicine

Brian Bates and Anne Morningstar, Bear Creek Organic Farm
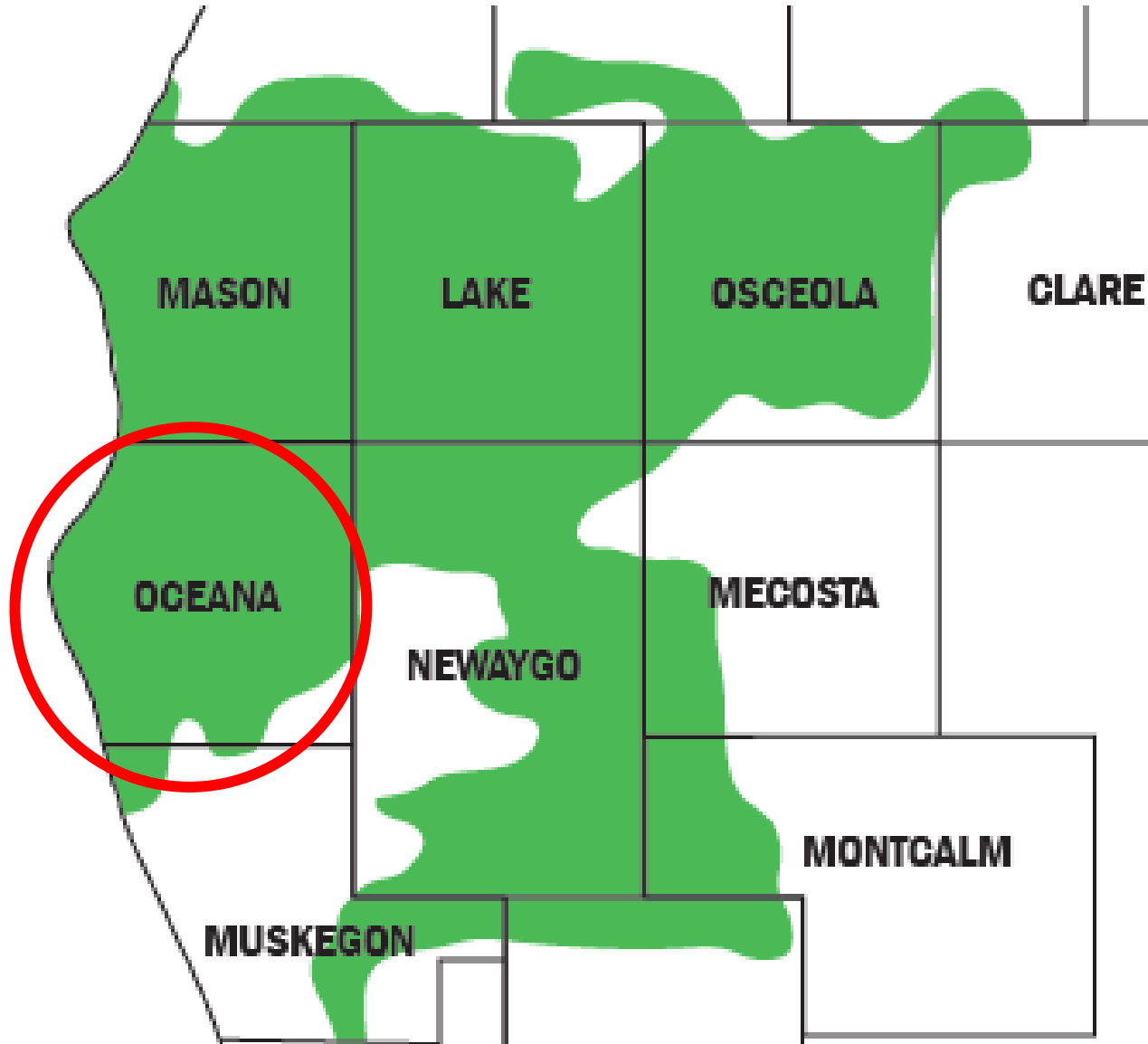
Key Achievements
(as of 1-25-2022)

▶ 11,678 Connected Homes & Businesses

▶ 3,000+ Miles of Fiber Installed

▶ 50 Full-time Jobs Added

▶ 160 Contracted Employees

▶ 27,000+ Homes Passed

▶ 42% Avg. Take Rate, 60% in Mature Areas

▶ 95% Customer Satisfaction Scores

Petoskey & Boyne Service Areas

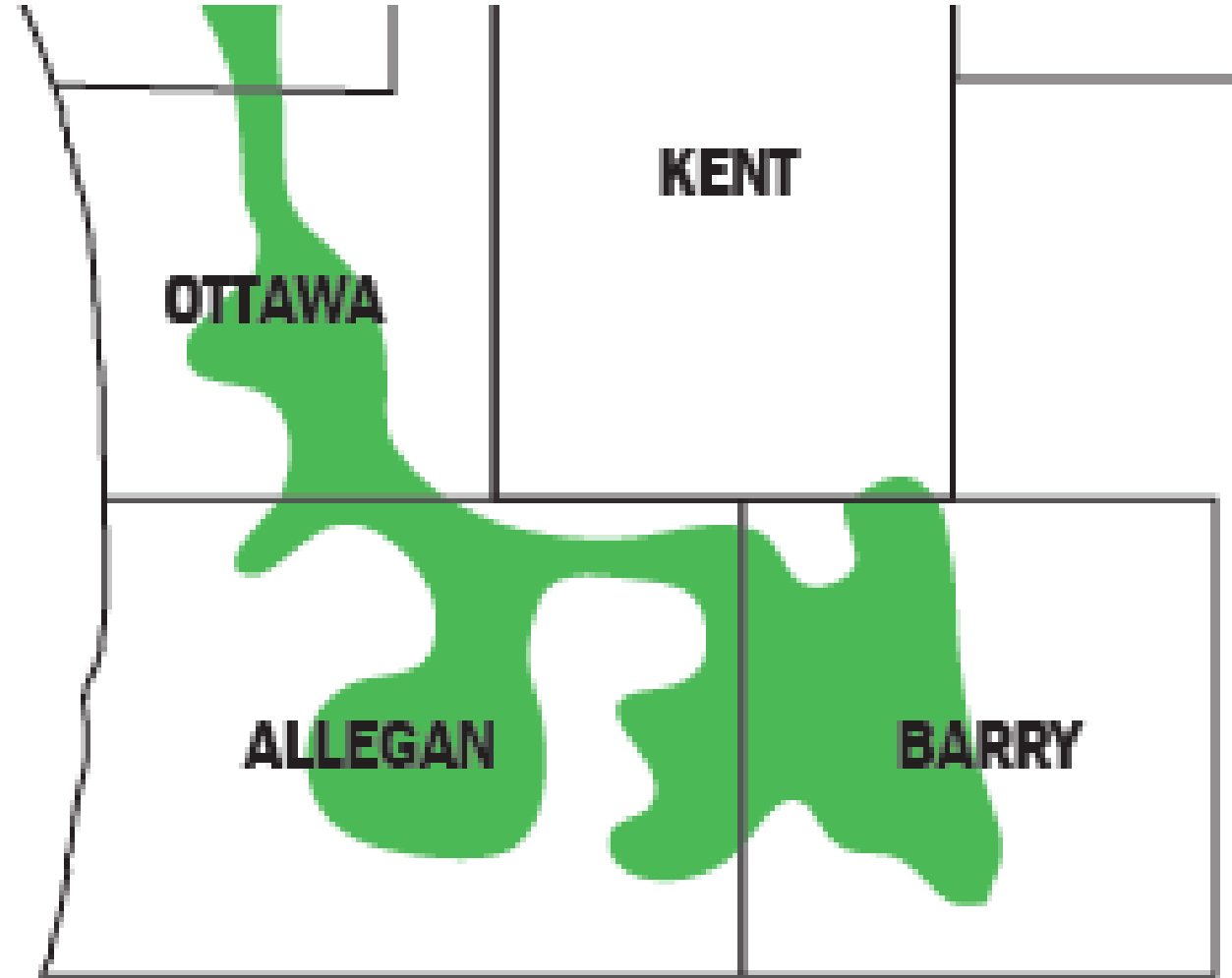- More than 11,000 active connections since 2018 in rural, underserved areas.
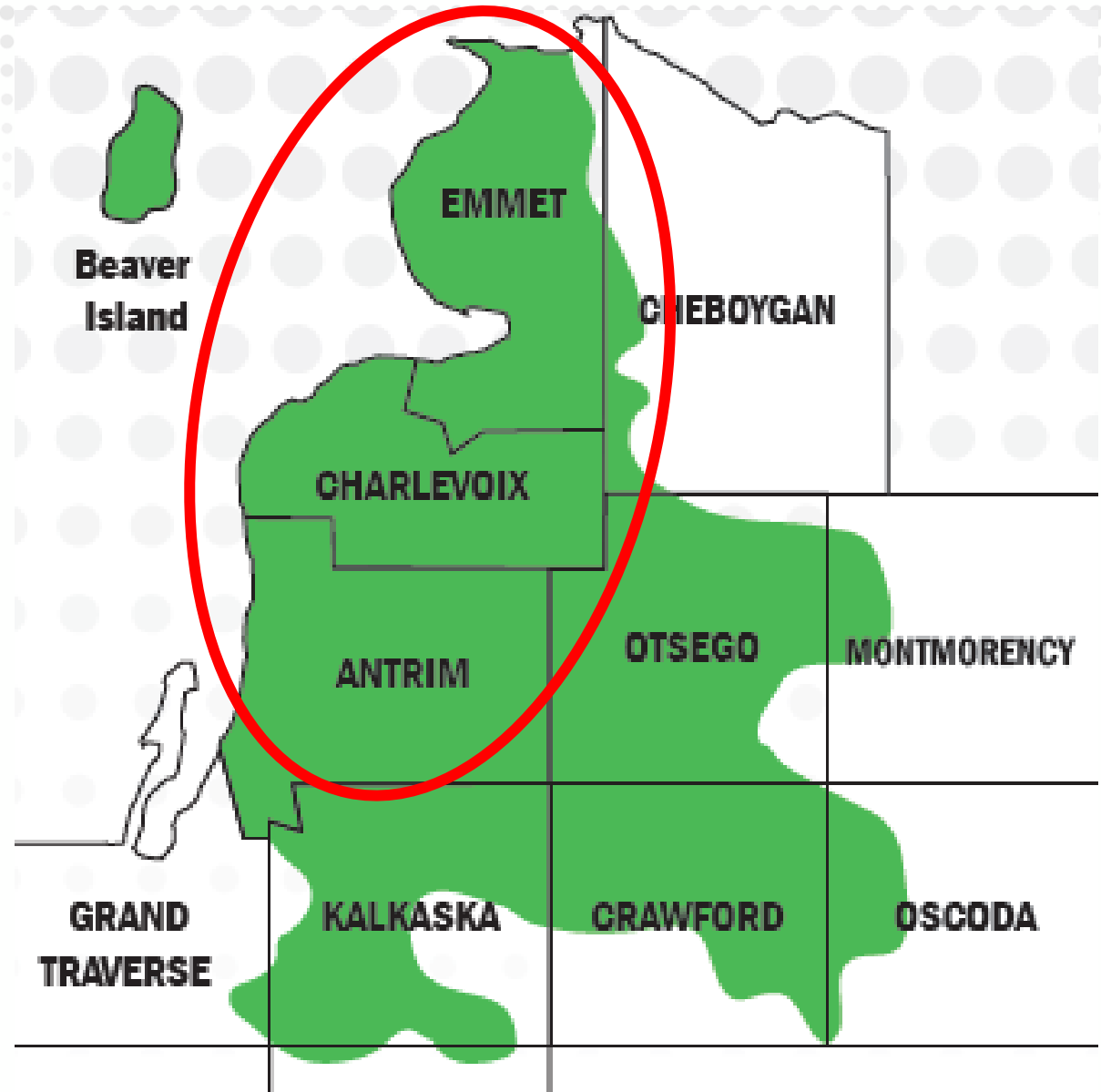
Hart Service Area

- Connections began in late 2021.
- Construction ongoing in 2022.

Wayland
Service Area

- Fielding and Design complete – Project is Shovel/Construction Ready.

- Construction and some connections began around Wayland in late 2021.

3,600 Homes and Businesses in Allegan County.

Residential Plans

BASIC
100 MBPS

FAMILY
200 MBPS

ULTRA
1,000 MBPS

$59⁹⁹ - $99⁹⁹

Business plans, vacation rates, and voice services are available.

truestreamfiber.com

More information/registration:
truestreamfiber.com

Chris Barber cbarber@glenergy.com
Shari Culver sculver@glenergy.com

Thank You

WE'RE BUILDING FIBER HERE

THIS AREA WILL HAVE ACCESS TO SUPER FAST INTERNET

BLOOMINGDALE COMMUNICATIONS
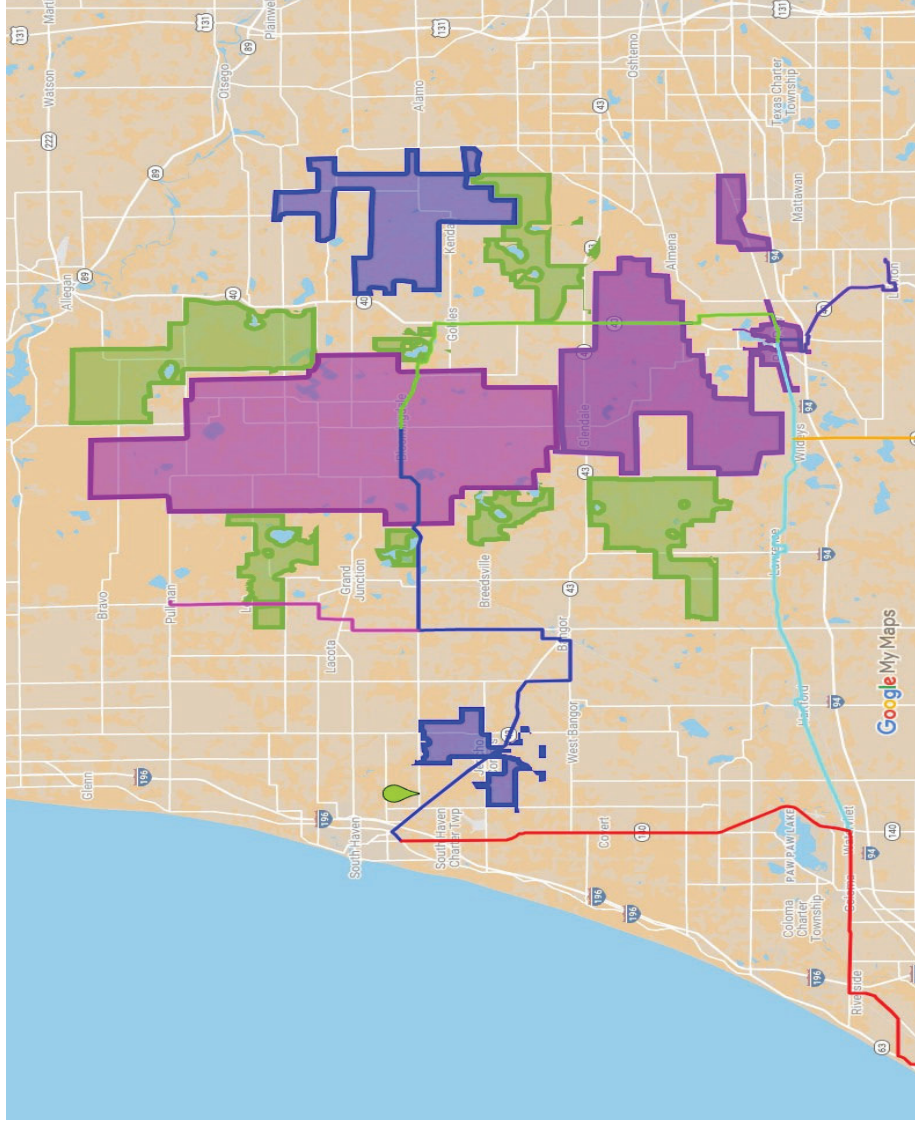
www.bloomingdalecom.net/fiber

Bloomingdale Communications Footprint

PURPLE = Existing Fiber to the Home (FTTH Service)

GREEN = USDA-RUS ReConnect Round 1

BLUE = UDSA-RUS ReConnect Round 2

BLOOMINGDALE
COMMUNICATIONS

USDA-RUS RECONNECT ROUND 1 AND ROUND 2 PROJECTS

BLOOMINGDALE
C O M M U N I C A T I O N S

☐ USDA-RUS ReConnect Round 1 project – It is a 50% loan/50% grant project that was applied for in June of 2019 and awarded in May of 2020. The application was for approximately $10.7 million

☐ Many parts of the project are now fully *SHOVEL READY* including being engineered, permitted and ready to go out to the contractors for bid

☐ Here in 2021, the Round 1 project is approximately $4.7 million overbudget. Our industry is seeing material and labor shortages that have driven costs significantly higher

☐ USDA-RUS has put the funding for the project *ON HOLD* until we are able to resolve the budget shortfall

BLOOMINGDALE COMMUNICATIONS

- We have approached the Townships and Counties about the use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to help offset the cost increases and get USDA-RUS to take the project *OFF HOLD*

- There are five general uses of ARPA funds
  - COVID response costs
  - Mitigate negative economic impacts related to COVID
  - Premium Payments to essential workers
  - Offset revenue losses at the township or county level
  - Investments in infrastructure including: (1) Water; (2) Sewer; and (3) *Broadband*

- We feel like the USDA-RUS ReConnect Round 1 project is the perfect use of the ARPA funds as it creates a positive impact for many, many township residents

BLOOMINGDALE
C O M M U N I C A T I O N S

- The townships can make a direct impact in their areas by helping to provide great broadband services in a very short period of time. Again, as we had previously mentioned, most of the ReConnect Round 1 areas are fully engineered, permitted and ready to go to bid

- We have been trying to convey a sense of urgency both to the Townships and the residents. We are seeing unprecedented materials and labor shortages in our industry. Our Director of Engineering has been in the industry for more than 40 years and he has never seen what we are experiencing today.

- We know that the areas in our ReConnect projects are VERY POORLY SERVED or COMPLETELY UNSERVED. We are working very hard to get the residents in those areas GREAT broadband service

BLOOMINGDALE COMMUNICATIONS

Counties and Townships that are impacted by ReConnect Round 1 Project with prospective locations:

Allegan County	968 locations total
■ Cheshire Township	381 locations
■ Lee Township	416 locations
■ Trowbridge Township	110 locations
■ Valley Township	61 locations

Van Buren County	1869 locations total
■ Almena Township	398 locations
■ Arlington Township	452 locations
■ Bloomingdale Township	310 locations
■ Columbia Township	533 locations
■ Pine Grove Township	176 locations

Bloomingdale Communications Footprint – Allegan County

DARK BLUE = Bloomingdale Fiber to the Home project

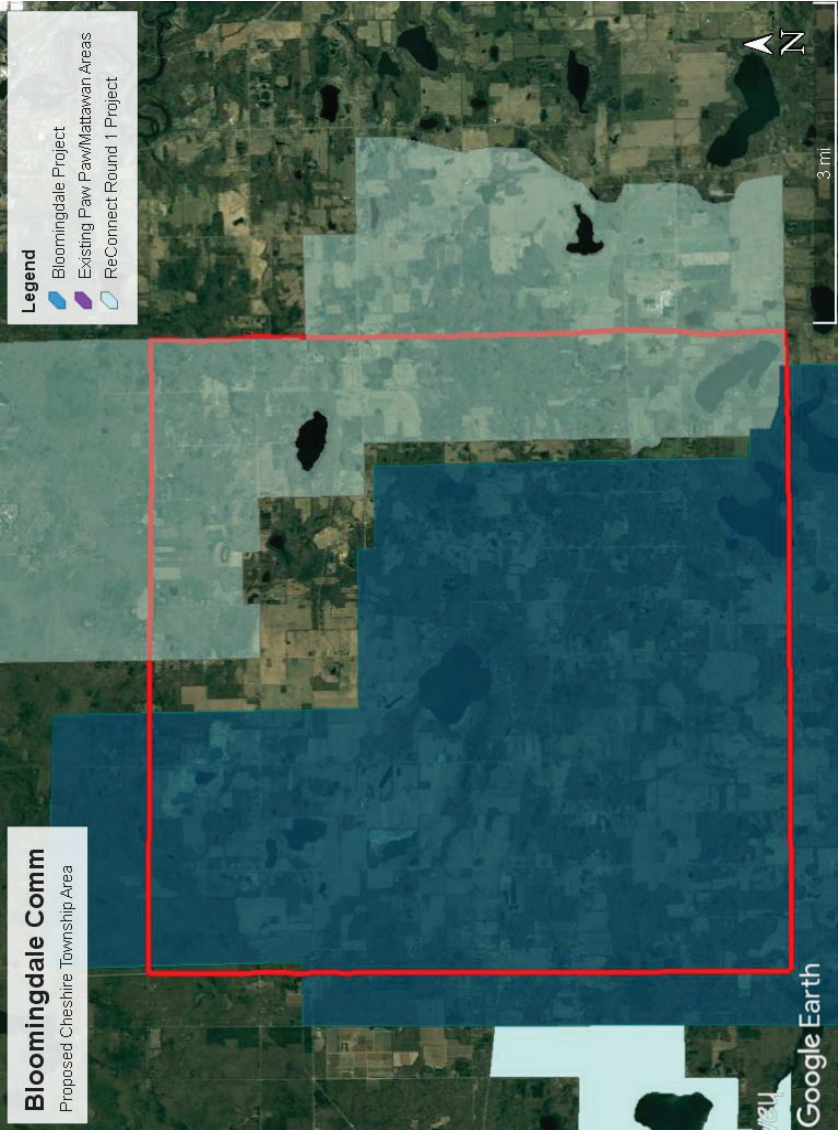LIGHT BLUE = USDA-RUS ReConnect Round 1 Project

GREEN = USDA-RUS ReConnect Round 2 project

Bloomingdale Comm
Proposed Allegan County Area Map

Legend
- Bloomingdale FTTH
- ReConnect Round 1
- ReConnect Round 2
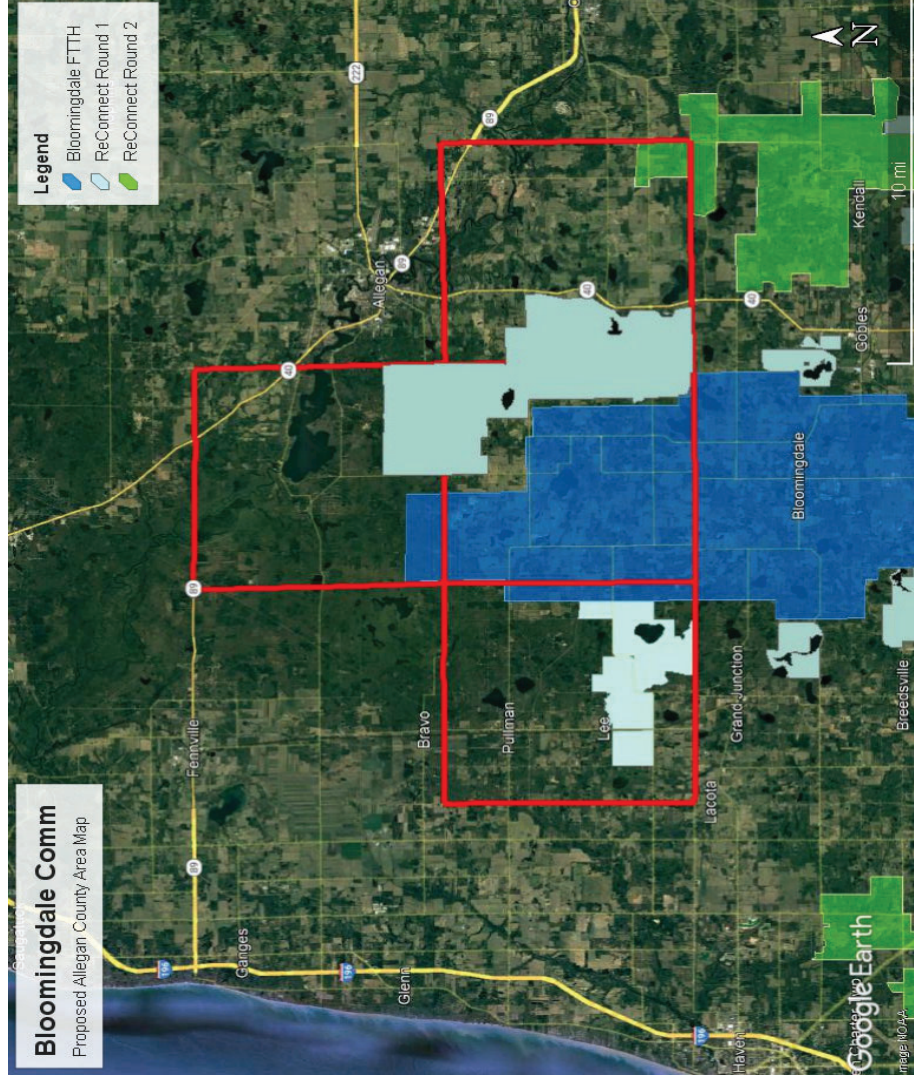
Bloomingdale Communications Footprint – Cheshire Twp

DARK BLUE = Bloomingdale Fiber to the Home Project

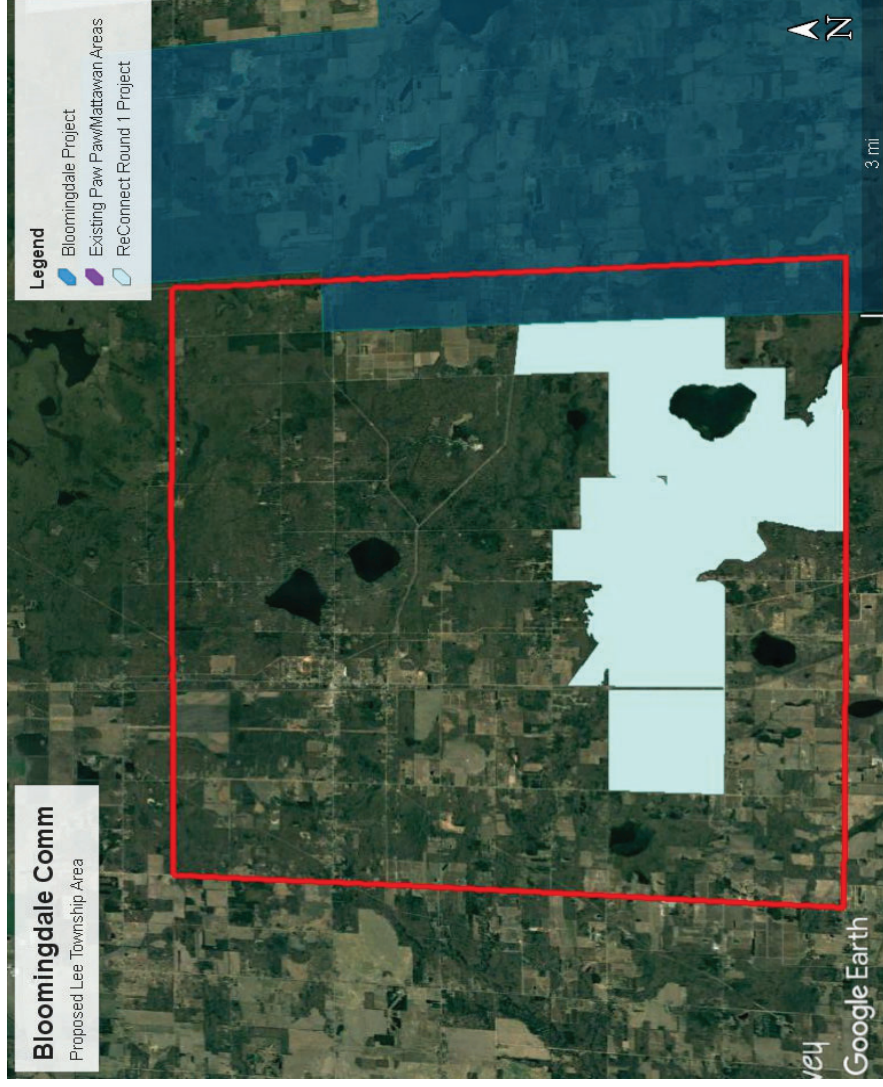LIGHT BLUE = USDA-RUS ReConnect Round 1 Project

Bloomingdale Comm
Proposed Cheshire Township Area

Legend
- Bloomingdale Project
- Existing Paw Paw/Mattawan Areas
- ReConnect Round 1 Project

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Google Earth

Bloomingdale Communications Footprint – Lee Twp

DARK BLUE = Bloomingdale Fiber to the Home Project

LIGHT BLUE = USDA-RUS ReConnect Round 1 Project

Bloomingdale Comm
Proposed Lee Township Area

Legend
- Bloomingdale Project
- Existing Paw Paw/Mattawan Areas
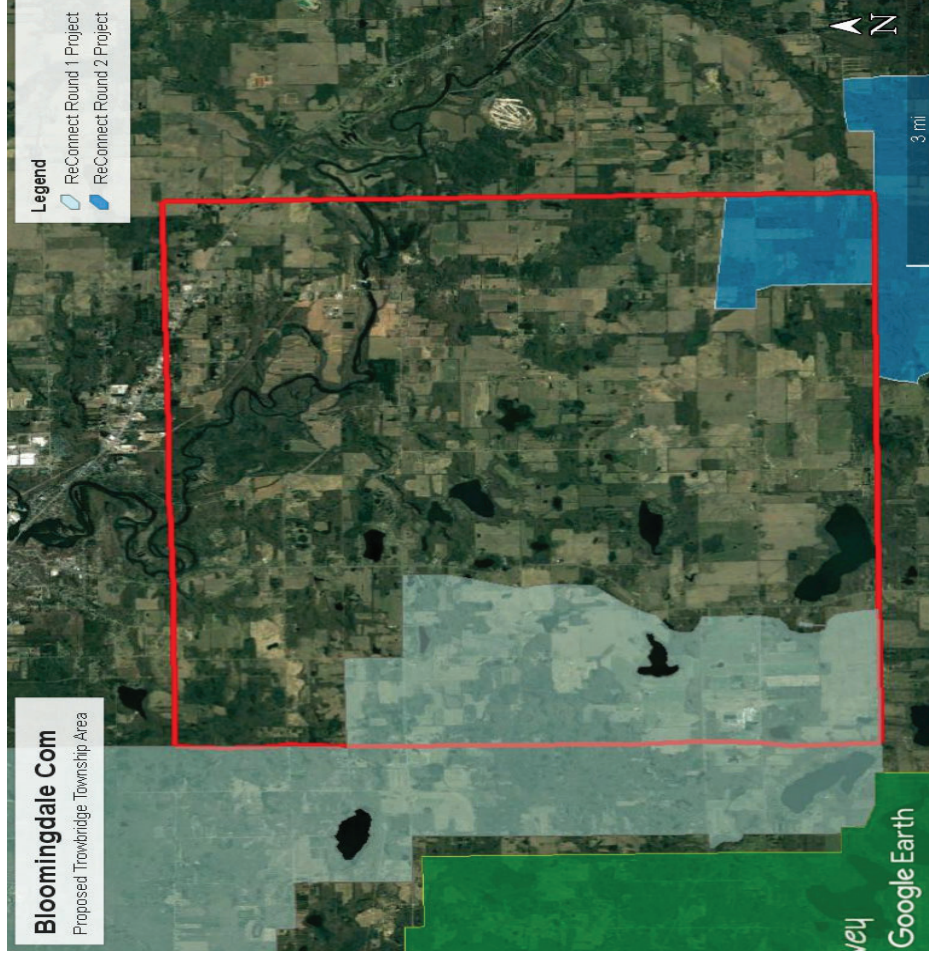- ReConnect Round 1 Project

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Bloomingdale Communications Footprint – Trowbridge Twp

DARK BLUE = USDA-RUS ReConnect Round 2 project

GREEN = Bloomingdale Fiber to the Home Project

LIGHT BLUE = USDA-RUS ReConnect Round 1 Project

Bloomingdale Com
Proposed Trowbridge Township Area

Legend
ReConnect Round 1 Project
ReConnect Round 2 Project

N

3 mi

Google Earth

Bloomingdale Communications Footprint – Valley - Twp

DARK BLUE = Bloomingdale Fiber to the Home Project

LIGHT BLUE = USDA-RUS ReConnect Round 1 Project

Bloomingdale Comm
Proposed Valley Township Area

Legend
- Bloomingdale Project
- Existing Paw Paw/Mattawan Areas
- ReConnect Round 1 Project

Google Earth