

Middle-Mile Advisory Committee
 October 21, 2022
 Meeting Recap and Transcript

The Middle-Mile Advisory Committee met on Friday, October 21, 2022 at 10:00am PST via virtual conference.

Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Overview

Chair Bailey-Crimmins welcomed everyone to the meeting.
 A quorum for the meeting was established.

Member		Designee	Present	Absent
California Department of Technology	Director Bailey-Crimmins		X	
California Public Utilities Commission	President Reynolds		X	
Department of Finance	Chief Deputy Director Miller	Department of Finance Manager Calvert	X	
Government Operations Agency	Secretary Tong		X	
Department of Transportation	Director Tavares	Chief Deputy Director Keever	X	
State Senate	Senator Gonzalez	(Ex-Officio Member)	X	
State Senate	Senator McGuire	(Ex-Officio Member)		X
State Assembly	Assembly Member Quirk-Silva	(Ex-Officio Member)	X	
State Assembly	Assembly Member Wood	(Ex-Officio Member)	X	

Committee members provided public comment:
 Assembly Member Quirk-Silva
 Assembly Member Wood
 President Reynolds

Agenda Item 2: Executive Report Out

Mark Monroe provided the executive report out, focusing on Construction Contracts and Middle-Mile Broadband Network progress. Mark Monroe announced that MMAC meeting will take place in November, but not in December, and that the meeting will resume in January 2023.

Agenda Item 3: Project Updates

Mark Monroe provided the California Department of Technology's (CDT's) update focusing on the project timeline.

Scott Adam provided the California Department of Technology's (CDT's) update on stakeholder outreach.

Janice Benton provided a California Department of Transportation update focused on project delivery, dig smart, preconstruction, preliminary projects, and efforts to streamline projects.

Tony Naughtin provided the Third-Party Administrator update focusing on core network backbone operation and future operational issues.

Jonathan Lakritz provided a California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) update focused on local agency technical assistance, California Advanced Services Fund grants received, and last mile funds.

Agenda Item 4: Public Comment

Public comments were made by:

Liza Massey

Patrick Messac

Martha Van Runyan

Closing Remarks

Committee members had no closing remarks.

Ms. Bailey-Crimmins thanked Committee members, staff, and attendees and noted the next meeting is scheduled for November 18.

The meetings adjourned at 11:20am PST.

(meeting transcript attached; video and presentation slides from meeting posted to Committee web site)

Transcript

MMAC Meeting – Friday, October 21, 2022

All right. So, good morning and welcome everyone to the October 2022 Middle Mile Advisory Committee. The first order of business is roll call. Mr. Przybyla, will you please review the meeting housekeeping items and perform roll call?

The housekeeping rules, as attendees, please note there is time allocated at the end of the meeting for public comment. Presenters, please cue Sam to advance your slides. And finally, committee members, please use the raise your hand feature on Zoom to cue the chair to call you to speak. Now committee member roll call. Chair Bailey- Crimmins.

Here.

President Reynolds.

Here.

Department of Finance Manager Calvert.

Chief Deputy Director Keever.

Here.

Secretary Tong.

Here.

Senator Gonzalez. Senator McGuire. Assembly Member Quirk-Silva. And Assembly Member Wood.

Here.

Madam Chair, we have a quorum.

Thank you, Mr. Przybyla. This has been a very eventful month since the last time we got together, we laid the first 500 feet of fiber in Poway, California, which is exciting and there's been several trips on really taking all of our hard work and bringing it to fruition. And so, you're going to hear a lot of great progress from all teams, CPUC, Department of Transportation, and CDT. So, before we get started with the formal agenda, I'd like to open it up to any committee members that might want to make some public comment. Yes, President Reynolds.

I was...I was thinking you can call on the Assembly member first. I saw her hand, but I'm happy to defer to go first. It's up to you, Chair.

Yeah, let's go ahead. Assembly Wood, is it? Or was it Quirk-Silva? Because I'm not seeing a raised hand on my end.

Quirk-Silva. Okay.

Assembly member Quirk-Silva.

Yeah. Good morning, everybody. I know that you guys have been really busy. I was sorry to miss the Poway trip. I saw some pictures and it looked really exciting...all those big cables, or I should say fiber so really excited about that. I also wanted to thank the Governor for signing my bill that would add representation to the Middle Mile Advisory committee. And that would be two new representatives that will bring a voice to local elected officials. And so, he also signed Dr. Woods' broadband mapping bill. Very quickly. We were a little disappointed AB 2749 was vetoed. This bill would have required the CPUC to review and act on the CASF Federal Funding applications within 180 days. We understand that you know...that some of the reasonings behind not signing the bill, but we're very committed to making sure that the infrastructure dollars are spent by 2026. And so, we're really hoping that we'll start to see some of those allocations moved out and into providers. And with that we know that there is kind of a timeline

ticking on that. But with that, that's some of the things that I had to say, and really appreciate the work you're doing. I understand we'll be hearing today that you are actually ahead of schedule on some of the deployment and we're excited by that. Thanks so much.

Thank you, Assembly Member Wood...uh, Quirk-Silva! Great to see you. Assembly Member Wood, you are on my mind.

Well, that's kind. Thank you. Appreciate that. I just want to say it was a wonderful experience to be in Poway last week to see that, it's a little emotional. And for me, personally, I've been working on broadband issues since I started in the Legislature and for...you know, eight years ago. To actually see that beginning of what could...will be life changing for people in my district. And I also want to thank Secretary Tong and Mr. Monroe for visiting my district, so that I got to be at both ends of the State in the last week and giving them an opportunity to see some of the special challenges we face and on the North Coast in implementing broadband. And also, the option to meet with our tribal partners, sovereign nation representatives of four tribal sovereign nations. And in there, and these in my...you know, these are some of the most under...unserved uh, people in the entire state so broadband will be a lifeline for them as it is for us, and I'm thankful to the Secretary and Mark for spending time with us and getting to see some beautiful country as well. So, thank you.

Thank you, Assembly member Wood. President Reynolds.

Thank you. I wanted to just highlight two things that are happening at the PUC. The first is the digital divide account, and this is a small program that has been in existence for some time. Um, small, but can be important to the folks who receive grants under the program. We're accepting applications now. The program offers grants to low for low income schools and they can be used for addressing physical gaps in local broadband networks for affordability, access to personal devices...digital skills training. This is an interesting program that has been around for a while. It was funded by, or it is funded by, the Department of General Services and the other State agencies that get revenues from leasing State property for placement of wireless network antennas. And so, it took some time for it to...the fund to grow to a level where we were ready to give out grants, but we're there now. And it was created about twenty years ago by former Assembly Member Marco Firebaugh So, you know... thinking about the legacy of the work that we're doing now, which is obviously much bigger, we're at the same time seeing the impact of our predecessors who started this work many years ago. So that's exciting. And we also have another Grant program that we are...we have gotten money out the door on and now, we have issued forty grants under the Local Agency Technical Assistance program. This is something that you'll hear a little bit more later on the agenda but I just wanted to highlight that this is happening. Forty grants are out for nearly nineteen million to cities and counties, and this is for the capacity for doing planning, engineering, and broadband infrastructure preparation for last mile networks to complement the work that's being done on the Middle Mile network. So, really an important piece of the puzzle here that we're putting together and works very closely with the Middle Mile project that's being undertaken, so really happy to let everybody know about those two programs. Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, President Reynolds. All right. I see no additional hands. We'll go ahead and go for our first agenda item, which is the executive report out from Mr. Mark Monroe.

All right. Very good. Good morning, committee members. We're happy to again meet and have the opportunity to provide an update on the MMBI project. As highlighted in the past, we're are increasingly moving to the execution phase of the MMBI project. This morning, we will be

discussing approximately six thousand eight hundred miles of construction contracts on which we are going out to bid. This represents up to sixty-eight percent of the total network and has been noted, it's a couple of years ahead of schedule in terms of where we...when we would be going out with these contracts. And as the Chair and other committee members have noted, we'll also be discussing the installation of the first five hundred feet of fiber that took place last week again down in San Diego. This morning CDT, Caltrans, Golden State Net and PUC will be providing updates on their work on the project. CDT will be providing an update on the bid solicitations that have gone out for construction for joint builds, purchases, leases and co-locations. We'll also be providing an update on our ongoing stakeholder engagement efforts. Caltrans will be providing an update on its preconstruction and construction progress. And we'll be discussing some of the lessons they've been able to learn on the initial eighteen projects that were selected and announced last November. A Golden State Net will provide an update on its work on regional exchange points, the physical security of the network, locations, fiber inventory system, procurements, and the business modeling efforts. And then the CPUC will be providing an update on its progress with regards to the last mile components of the program. Also, we want to note our plan to have another MMAC meeting...it's scheduled in November but to then cancel the December meeting...we have a lot of scheduled conflicts there as we get close to the holidays. But then we would again meet as scheduled as planned in January. And with that, that's the end of my executive report out. And Chair...members, thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Monroe. Do any of the committee members have any questions regarding the executive brief before we go into the next agenda item. All right, I see none. So, the next agenda item we have is uh...project approach updates which has multiple speakers. First up is the California Department of Technology with Mr. Mark Monroe.

All right. Very good. So, the first thing we wanted to do is kind of review just kind of the goal of optimization of coverage. I think we've you know, we've tried to kind of continue to talk through this and I want to make sure we have the...take the opportunity to answer any questions as we go through it and just review it. When we look at building this so that the network and the overall development of the ten thousand miles, we look at, obviously, that the building of standalone projects. I think this is going to be the largest component of this project really is to go out and just and build it ourselves along the State highway system and Caltrans is busy with their pre-construction work on those efforts. We're also looking at opportunities for joint builds. This is where Caltrans doesn't need to do the work, but we can partner with other entities you know, they're a part of the industry where they've been working on with planned projects for construction, or where existing infrastructure might even be purchased. So, looking at really the overall, how we uh...all different components of the network that we'll have to have, and how we can you know how we can secure the various components, whether it's conduit or actual construction, or even fiber. And then the third alternative obviously is uh...we've talked about in the past is leasing through the indefeasible rights of use...these IRUs. And so, as we look forward here...as we kind of talk through the contracting approaches we've got here, that's really...those are the kind of the big pieces that we need to make sure that we're talking through. Next slide. All right. So, with regards to the approach that we've had to construction contracting, one of the key things that we've that we started to talk through in past meetings is kind of the overall approaches. When we look at the sixty eight hundred miles, we're really, really excited to be moving forward with a lot of these construction contracts....really, the context that we want to make sure everybody understands is generally speaking when you do a project, you would do pre-construction, and once that's all done, that's your design. I hope you're permitting. Then, sometime in 2024 likely, we would start rolling out construction contracts and so in an effort to get ahead of that, we are moving forward with these construction contracts ahead of that... ahead of that pre-construction work. So, while Caltrans continues to

do their design and their permitting work, we will be getting bids this December from you know, for these various contracts. So, when we look at construction manager, general contractor, where...that's our CMGC, that's where Caltrans would bring on a construction contractor to help them design the project. That's...in the past for really complex projects. That's been very helpful. And it allows them to really zero in on solutions rather than having to take a kind of a broader approach. And so that's when we look at the CMGC, that's the approach that we're looking at taking there. And so, similarly with the job order contracting, those really work for some of the less complicated segments. And so, as we approach those, we're you know we looked at...did an assessment of the full ten thousand miles work with Caltrans and some of our other partners to really look at the ten thousand miles and see where are the more complex segments for CMGC would make more sense. And where are the uh, the less complex segments, where job order contracting would make sense, and one of the advantages of the job order contracting is that it's uh...we're not necessarily committing to a set number of miles, you know, whereas the CMGC contract would be...usually be for a specific number of miles. The job order contract you know, allows us the flexibility based on the prices given to determine how much we're able to, how much we ultimately go forward with in terms of work authorizations. And so, we can really right size based on costs. And then the other alternative...that flexibility also allows us to adapt to what we learn in terms of where leasing alternatives exist you know, when we look at the existing infrastructure so uh...important...the job order contracting, we think is really going to be an important tool. Next slide. So, as we look at that, the contracts that we've gone out with in October, we had...we did the...what we call an RFI square. It's really tried to try to go out to industry to look for all options available to solve for our ten thousand mile challenge. It includes, obviously IRU leases that where we...usually they're about twenty years, we are able to go out and secure that twenty years. You pay that as a capital cost upfront and then you basically purchase the access to it. And so, we think that that's a potential tool that we want to make sure we understand from the industry what actually is available into what costs. As part of that procurement, we're also doing the...asking for any options for joint builds or purchases of existing infrastructure, and the idea here being that again, when if we have projects or partners that have already been gone through, that the planning development per main processes to put together a project, we want to be able to...and they're willing to partner with us, that we just share that cost of construction, and we're able to get in the ground much quicker and deliver this faster and at a lower cost. And then the third component that we want to make sure everybody understands is relative to co-location. When you have a network, you have obviously places you're going to need to put your servers, your computing hardware, and then the co-location allows us to use to basically rent space for this equipment from other third parties out there that already have facilities. The alternative to this really would be to construct our own. And so, we want to make sure that as we look at this, we're able to optimize and use the existing infrastructure where it's going to make the most sense. And so, that's the third component of that IRU. So, we've already talked a bit about the job order contracting. This is where you know, working through Caltrans and our partners, we've identified 5100 miles. We've broken it out amongst about five different regions. Some will remember that Golden State Net had provided a map that kind of broke the State into five major regions throughout that we would kind of be focusing now on and approaching as a kind of separate segments. So based on that we've gone out with these five job order contract bids and want people to...want the industry to, you know, be able to show us what they can do. We've had a bidders' conference that was held yesterday morning to kind of talk the industries through...industry representatives and the contractors through the project, and help them, you know, answer any questions as they prepare their bids. And then the third component is the CMGC contracts. Some will remember that when we went through...in previous MMACs, Caltrans had presented some early project lists. They're not totally in 1700 miles, and really these are where districts have gone out, look at some of the more complicated areas and developed proposals or are basically

contracts for CMGC. And so, Caltrans will be...has been going out. They'll kind of talk us through a little more of the status of these...another 1700 miles, and that's really what we're going to get to us um...you know, with our business partners with Caltrans getting to the point of 6800 miles of construction contracts which, very excited about the progress there. Next slide. As you'll recognize this slide as our ongoing project timeline that takes us to completing, permitting, and design, and transitioning to construction on the flow basis through 2023-24, and then competing construction by 2026. And to help...if we can go to the next slide, to kind of help, we've provided this zoomed-in version...can we go to the next slide? There we go...um, zoomed-in version again of the project timeline that reflects the bidding period for the contracts that we just discussed. It runs through December of this calendar year while pre-construction work at Caltrans continues. In January, the bids on the 68% of the middle mile broadband and network will inform us regarding how much construction components will cost and how best to really optimize the network both in terms of cost and in terms of timing within the Federal timeframes and the funding we have available. Based on this optimization model, CDT would plan on Caltrans going out to bid for the remaining construction components of the network in the Spring of 2023 so that all construction is provided for...um, by the end of this fiscal year. And then based on the bids received, CDT will move forward with agreements for joint builds, co-locations, leases and the other components that will really pull together the network. Next slide. All right. As I think the members have already noted, uh...this last week, we're excited Secretaries...uh, Tony Tavares and I'm sorry...Secretary Tong and uh...um, Omishakin and Director Bailey-Crimmins and uh, Tavares joined Senator Jones and Assembly Member Wood, Antonio Villaraigosa and uh...a number of community representatives in San Diego for pulling the first 500 feet of the 10,000 mile network. This is a...you know, really historic event that to get this in the ground and actually have that construction and the fiber installed. This was a dig smart component of one of the initial eighteen projects in San Diego. It was...these were the ones that were announced last November. Caltrans was able to do this by adding fiber to an existing transportation project because all of the pre-construction work that we, that Caltrans has to do has already been done on these projects. There might...there's some potential opportunities to add fiber and add the infrastructure to these projects as they move through them. This particular project is more than fifteen miles long, and we'll eventually include fiber along the entire route, providing an open access, middle mile backbone to communities in San Diego and beyond. And these dig smart opportunities like this really highlight the potential. We're adding this conduit and this infrastructure to projects and so really excited about that. Just over the past three days, Secretary Tong and several others of us visited Districts 1 and 4 as Assembly Member Wood had noted and part of that trip, we were able to see the ongoing transportation projects that Caltrans is working on...one of which has already added conduit and fiber and then uh...conduit for the fiber rather, and another one is considering alternatives. We're able to kind of discuss some of the design alternatives that might help facilitate the...you know, the lowest cost and the most efficient addition of fiber or conduit to the project. So, we feel like we continue to make the material progress and want to thank the committee for the opportunity to share this and with that, I will turn it back over to the Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Monroe. Very eventful month, as you can all see. I'm going to go ahead and first member to call on is Secretary Tong.

Thank you, Chair. I just wanted to echo that many of the comments made earlier at the beginning on what was a great historic day to start the first five-hundred feet with this dig once opportunity that was on the October 13th, and then last couple of days...uh, thank you to Assembly Member Wood hosting us at visiting his district and we also took on the way up on the way back, both trip...it was a long drive by, you know, because uh it's a long distance, but we were able to take advantage of that long drive to also visit additional dig smart potentials from

Caltrans. So just really want to do a shout out for once again Assembly Member Wood for hosting us and creating opportunity for us to meet with the community, especially the tribal community. Heard a lot, learned a lot, knowing there's more needs to be done. But one common theme that was really, really, good is that not only the community members are so much in need in terms of the urgency of making this happen; we are also hearing from many of the Caltrans staff on the ground that we visit those sites, they were very eager to see what they can do to complete this as soon as possible. So, it was a well...um, trip overall and Assembly Member Quirk-Silva, we definitely miss you on October 13. Hopefully, at the next event, we can either come visit you or see you if we have another opportunity to do further promotion of this work here. Thank you.

Thank you, Secretary, for your leadership. Alright. Any other committee members that have comments? Alright. The next agenda item is stakeholder outreach with Mr. Scott Adams.

Good morning, Chair Bailey-Crimmins, committee members and members of the public. If you could go to the next slide, please Sam. I just really want to thank you for an opportunity and provide a quick update on partner and stakeholder engagement. We wanted to share a couple of highlights of just some of the engagement that has happened over the last month. Um, the first three...the city of Oakland, the Fresno Coalition for digital inclusion and the San Joaquin Valley Broadband Consortia, and uh, we had really good meetings with them, based on uh, some of the comments and questions they had raised at the last Middle Mile Advisory Committee meeting and um, really it got to better understand their local efforts and how the State's efforts can align with theirs. Do want to highlight what represents a bit of an expansion of the stakeholder universe thus far for us on broadband. We did meet with and present to the Insure the Uninsured Project Statewide Broadband stakeholder group in the last couple of weeks, and really got to understand what that coalition is doing in the broad space, and align with them on the States broadband for all efforts. Next we joined with the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development to meet with the promise zone communities across the State, and then, as Deputy Director Monroe and Secretary Tong mentioned, there was the North Coast visit and listening sessions. Central to all of these meetings, and I think you've heard the thread from Deputy Director Monroe and Secretary Tong is that uh, it's really critical that we stress that we want to better understand the local efforts and the local concerns and needs, and ensure how the State's broadband efforts are actually designed to help address and align and complement those efforts. The final thing that I'd like to do is make a plug for this Monday. We are going to the Department of technology and partnership with the California Public Utilities Commission and other State agencies will be holding a Fall Broadband for All Summit and Digital Equity and Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Planning Kick-off that will be held virtually. It's shaping up to be a great event. I'm pleased to note that we already have over 600 registrants, and uh, would encourage you know, folks on this meeting to both sign up and register if you haven't already, and please distribute this widely through your networks. We really want to expand the table and have a big tent for both this event and for the planning efforts that are gonna to continue to ensue over the next year. So that concludes my report, Director Bailey-Crimmins. Back to you.

Thank you, Mr. Adams. Are there any questions or comments? Okay, we have the next update is from Caltrans' Janice Benton.

All right. Good morning, everybody. Good morning, Chair Bailey-Crimmins, Committee members, and others from the public. My name is Janice Benton. I'm the Assistant Deputy Director over the Middle Mile Broadband Initiative for Caltrans, and we'll be providing today's update on the progress being made. Next slide. So, Caltrans' updates reflects the milestones

we recently reached with the Broadband Middle Mile Initiative. As mentioned earlier, the job order contracts to construct more than half of the network specifically, 5,100 miles have been advertised. On top of that, contracts to construct an additional 750 miles using the construction manager general contractor method have also been advertised, and while the slide indicates 960 miles are ready to advertise, approval on additional miles was recently provided, and we now have 1,130 miles that are being prepared for advertisement, and we anticipate much of this to advertise in the coming weeks. And, as I mentioned last month, these accomplishments have been reached through partnerships and collaboration with CDT, PUC, and the broadband team leveraging Caltrans resourcefulness and expertise. We are also leveraging the benefits of SB 156, which allows the alternative delivery of the job order contracting and the CMGC delivery method. And we are also learning from the initial 18 projects to gain a better understanding of the dynamics to deliver the overall program of projects, and I will elaborate some more on these lessons learned later. So next slide. So, reaching those key milestone of advertising more than half of the network has taken significant work and that is reflected in this slide. These charts reflect the progress made on preconstruction activities since the September MMAC meeting. And again, as it's shown in the past, the chart show percentage of completed tasks in green, the percent of tasks in progress in blue, and then the percentage of miles where preliminary project decisions are still to be made in gray. So, next slide. And then this slide further breaks down that information by district, and it shows the percentage of miles assigned to projects, and the advancement of that has happened in each of the districts. And as with the previous slide, substantial progress has been made over the last month. And again, I want to note the chart does not reflect the number of miles. It's just the reflection of the percentage of miles and so forth, and so the miles by district varies district by district. Alright, next slide. So, whether it's from the Middle Mile Broadband effort or our transportation projects, Caltrans continually examines how we do business to find opportunities to streamline efforts and accelerate the delivery. For the Middle Mile Broadband projects, the initial 18 locations have created a number of lessons learned that have already influenced our processes. In looking at the valuable insights we've been able to leverage as we navigate the Middle Mile build, they can be grouped into three key areas: access authority, project design, and permitting. So, as we began the work in the initial 18 locations and more specifically Location 14, which is thirty-three miles in the high desert of San Bernardino, questions were raised about the property we could utilize. Could we install broadband where Caltrans has easements, which gives us the right to use the rights-of-way. The result was the passage of Senate Bill 198 earlier this year that amended the streets and highways code to specify that we are given the authority to install broadband where we do have easement rights. The initial 18 locations have also influenced our design procedures. Following the enactment of SB 156, we reviewed and updated existing policies, procedures, and best practices to accommodate Broadband within the state highway system. And then looking across the initial 18, there is a diversity of location types. There are very urban areas with limited rights-of-ways, such as Location 15 in Los Angeles and Location 16 in Orange County. And there are also very environmentally sensitive and topographically challenging areas, as with Location 11 in Death Valley. These demonstrated a need for flexibility, and how and where the middle mile broadband infrastructure is installed, while also minimizing the potential impacts to the transportation infrastructure. So, we are leveraging innovations and technology, such as micro-duct fiber, which can be placed into smaller trenches, and having reduced impact. The outcome is the potential for less disruption to existing infrastructure. Another result is under limited circumstances, we do allow micro trenching under the asphalt pavement. And to be able to construct the Middle Mile broadband network in the timeframe outline, we also needed to identify ways to best navigate the permitting process. These efforts are underway and are aimed at proactively addressing potential delays and challenges. So, while we cannot avoid the challenges completely, we are taking the numerous steps to minimize and as much as possible, avoid the issues and areas with no complexities. So, as we approve as I have previously

mentioned in the MMAC meetings, we continue to work with our partners at the State and Federal resource agencies to get the programmatic permits and approvals to meet the environmental and Federal land access requirements. We continue to coordinate with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Water Board, and the California Coastal Commission on these efforts. These efforts are possible in part because we are leveraging our history of successfully partnering with these resource agencies. So, Caltrans in collaboration with Department of Technology has been meeting with the State and Federal resource agencies to leverage these partnerships to benefit the Middle Mile Broadband Initiative. Ultimately, the insight we have gained from the initial 18 locations are helping us to navigate and steer through the challenges, so that we can reduce pre-construction efforts, and issue the project work packages faster. So, next slide. As shared at previous MMAC meetings, Caltrans continually assesses opportunities to leverage existing projects and implement dig smart opportunities. We have identified dig smart opportunities that cover approximately 637 miles of the middle mile network. With the dig smart projects, we are adding broadband components to already designed projects. This can create unique challenges, such as working with the space available and looking at opportunities to leverage advancements in technology as well as potential design adjustments as Mr. Monroe mentioned earlier. So, we are also looking to at the timing and schedule of the impact on our project or in the transportation projects, and how that would impact with adding the broadband to them. So, with the big dig smart, we may not be able to leverage economies of scale as we can do with regional job order contracts and the construction manager general contractor delivery method. And so, as with all of these broadband efforts, we work closely with Department of Technology to evaluate what is the best path forward, and we are all mindful of being good stewards of the State resources. So, in closing Caltrans continues to take the necessary steps to move projects forward and have contracts out with the commitment to have the big data to the Department of Technology in mid-December. This month, Caltrans advertised five regional JLCs that include approximately the five thousand one hundred miles. And since July, Caltrans has advertised for CMGC projects covering more than seven hundred and fifty-five miles, and with an additional 1,130 being packaged and ready to go to advertisement. So, Caltrans remains committed to this broadband initiative and continuous to partner with the Department of Technology to address the challenges and continue to find opportunities to accelerate the deployment of the Middle Mile network. This concludes my Caltrans update and thank you for your time.

Ms. Benton, thank you very much for your presentation. Great progress on the contracting and getting ready to go to contracting. I guess I should also raise my hand as a Chair. Um, my one question for you was on the dig smart, the public may notice that the numbers did go down slightly from September-October. Would you mind just quickly, explaining what had happened there? Because sometimes it may not be a current highway project, but maybe it's being picked up in another avenue.

Yea so, thank you for that question. So yeah, so what we recognized is as we are identifying these dig smart opportunities, we continue down the path of finalizing the design and then getting cost estimates from our contractors. And sometimes, when we're doing these small segments and small pieces, we don't get that economy of scale in terms of the price. So, we may be choosing to move those out of a dig smart opportunity, and then moving them into perhaps our job order contract method of delivery or our construction manager general contractor method. So, that's where we're going to start seeing more of the miles move around on what's the best path forward for those locations.

Thank you, Miss Benton. All right, Secretary Tong.

You asked my question, so thank you for that Chair. I would also want to take the opportunity to also thank Ms. Benton for your leadership and dedication and also Mr. Keever. I know you you've been representing Caltrans on this, you know aside from last Thursday on October 13 of five hundred feet. As I mentioned last three days, we had a chance to visit District 1 and District 4 on the way up and down from Assembly Member Wood's district and really firsthand opportunity to talk to the team, the Caltrans team on the ground and hearing their challenges, and one of the things they like to see that could potentially help you know some of these effort, and I would just love to have an opportunity to sit down and debrief you all of our learning and then see if there's any way that with GovOps and the Department of Technology alongside with GSN as well as CPUC to continue to support the acceleration of this effort.

Thank you, Secretary. Um, Mr. Keever.

Yeah. Thank you, Chair. I also want to express my thanks to Ms. Benton for her leadership and to the teams. A tremendous amount of progress, still a lot of work ahead of us, but we've made tremendous progress in the in the last month, and I wanted to take this opportunity to announce some organizational change. It may not feel like a change, but it's certainly a focus. So, Janice Benton is the Division Chief for Design at Caltrans. So that's a huge responsibility in and of itself, and at the same time she's been key to the progress that we've made on the Caltrans side with broadband. Recently, we made the decision to appoint Janice full-time to the broadband program, and so her design responsibilities will be temporarily backfilled on the on the Caltrans side, just given the nature of the projects, and so certainly want to thank Janice for stepping into this and focusing 100% on the broadband program. So, look forward to the continued progress and the collaboration together. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Keever and you saw a few claps there. We can't do the acknowledgments on this particular one, but congratulations! We are so happy, Janice...for you, and happy for us. Assembly Member Wood.

Actually, I thought somebody else had their hand up there. Mr. Keever possibly or did he pull his hand down...or?

He pulled his hand down. Yes.

Yeah. Okay, okay, uh...first of all, yeah, thank you. And um...just uh, one of the uh...just the...just to flag this for the future, one of the challenges we've heard from the private sector is they seek to do deploy networks...is our challenges in permitting, and the length of time it takes to get permits approved. And you know, recognizing that you know Caltrans is not...Caltrans is in the road building business, not in the broadband building business...but you are now, uh...and um, I hope that as we go forward in the future, some of this permitting can, you know...efficiency and the timing of some of this as you're learning about this can help with other...the deployment of other projects going forward. At times it feels like there's two standards. There's the standard that the private industry has to adhere to, and there's a standard of the Caltrans adheres to in their projects, and they're not the same it appears in some cases. So, consistency...efficiency are really important as we go forward because at the end of the day, there's going to be significant private sector involvement on the ISP end of this possibly as they seek to build these out, and so I hope that as we learn more, these efficiencies can transmit to the private sector as well, so that we can hopefully see these projects you know, the permitting be expedited.

Thank you, Assembly Member Wood. We have Assembly member Quirk-Silva.

Hi, again. Yeah. You saw me doing lots of cheers for Janice working uh...being uh...delegated to doing this full time. It certainly is a project that requires that effort. So, congratulations to Janice. I'm really impressed by your updates and so forth. But just two things, Assembly Member Jim Wood is speaking my language as you've heard us talk several times about permitting. It's not just with broadband. It's really across the State, and every umbrella you've heard me talk about housing, permitting, about um...water infrastructure so much, and we really can get stuck for months if we can't get those permits moved. So just a concurring there. But just a quick, quick question for Mark. I didn't ask it when he was doing his presentation. But just on the Poway...um, have we identified any partners that have our showed interest to connect to this new infrastructure?

Yeah so...um...my under...and so I can't say that we have right now. I can say that when SANDAG and Caltrans were originally working and looking at the possibility of this project, there were several partners that are potential. So, you know, when you look at where, where it is, where the project is located, where it's coming from and going to out in San Diego, we know there's several tribal communities out there that will benefit as well, some others. So, if we can get back to you with, uh, at least kind of where those locations are uh...you know, something more specific. But um, you know, I think one of the...one of the challenges that this project is really going to help address is that when you look at those last mile projects, it's hard to get funding or it wouldn't make sense necessarily for providers to just go out and build them without having a middle mile to connect to. So um, you know a lot of the philosophy in the...that really...the policy benefit of the MMBI is this gives that reason to those last mile providers to link up with us. So, as we move forward, we're going to see a lot more of that.

Thank you.

Thank you, Assembly member Quirk-Silva. Any other questions for Janice. I see none. We're going to go ahead and go to the Golden State Network update with Mr. Tony Naughtin.

Thank you, Director. And good morning, everyone. Tony Naughtin, Chief Operating Officer of Golden State Net, always appreciative of these opportunities to participate and update in the monthly committee meetings. If we can go to the first slide, please. So, Golden State Net...uh, last time in our discussion, we were making reference to the...what I was calling the services architecture. More broadly, here are key work product items we've provided to CDT. And in some cases, we're still working on for the development of the network. As was referenced briefly earlier in the meeting, we've provided detailed plans and process for how last mile providers and other customers will connect into the middle mile. We've been working on timelines and selection criteria for regional exchange point locations. And again, regional exchange points are facilities in which servers and other supporting equipment will be co-located. And as Mark Monroe mentioned, the co-location process itself is now part of the RFI squared that has been issued. These will be important locations, not just to house servers from content providers or service providers utilizing the Middle Mile network to service either middle mile customers, such as carriers, but also businesses and even individuals in some cases. And these will be important facilities which we are thinking of in in many communities as opportunity centers if you will. They will be gateways for connectivity and services into the middle mile network. They will also support access into the network. Um, but they will really provide content and services on the servers. I mentioned that provide opportunities for people in the communities and last mile facilities that the Middle Mile network will service. We've been focusing in the last couple of months and have provided to CDT a plan for the important physical security of the network facilities, particularly security around the many, many retransmission huts that will be located

around the state in support of this network, now numbering approximately 183 in numbers as far as the retransmission huts, sometimes referred to as ILA huts in the business. And the location of those huts continues with the engineering assistance and support from CENIC's engineering team, now roughly 60% in collaboration with Caltrans have been placed on the map as to where the ideal best locations will be for those huts. Of course, that work continues. The active electronics which I mentioned last time, the Build of Materials, which is what BOMs stands for uh, it's a very detailed multiple set of equipment configurations. So, the work continues and really never stops in some respects in terms of refining the precise details of those equipment BOMs both for core backbone nodes on the network as well as lateral nodes on the network. And we're working closely with CDT and the Department of General Services to make sure that the best pricing for the procurement of that equipment is obtained and that process continues. It's quite detailed and has a bit of a long tail, but making very good process on that. This last point on this slide is quite important. We're developing a plan for distributed field engineering. The availability of field engineering to support resources. This is quite important. Uh, you have to have field engineering out distributed across the State as the construction activity is going on to support Caltrans, their contractors, and really all the partners in this program with expertise and outside plant construction. These field engineers, they'll be able to help address dynamic circumstances, at times help make decisions on construction variances. If there's a topological or geologic challenge that wasn't anticipated in the network design itself. So, assisting in real-time in the field with some of the decisions that will have to be made as circumstances that were perhaps not as expected are encountered in the building process. If we can go to the next slide, please. We continue to make good progress with CDT in the bidding and procurement aspects of this as Mark Monroe mentioned, and RFI square has now been issued, which is broad in nature covering dark fiber, joint builds, co-location of regional exchange points and other types of co-location, and even potential network acquisitions that may come to the fore as an opportunity to be part of this middle mile network from existing infrastructure that's already out there. We are collaborating with CDT and continue to will help to assess the responses and provide a good industry and technical information to CDT in interpreting and assessing their responses to the RFI2 process specifically in terms of support systems that the construction and development process will need, I've mentioned one or two times before a fiber management system, an RFP this week has been issued for the fiber management system, which again is a software platform that supports the ongoing construction processes of the network providing a specifications mapping in the GIS context. It's accessible by all participants who have privileges that is involved in the construction and network development process, including those in the field. There are times that real time decisions as I was mentioning a moment ago in terms of the field engineering supervisors, real-time decisions and analysis needs to happen. The fiber management system supports collaboration by distributed people, including those in the field as the construction process goes on, and then quite importantly, the fiber management system will be key in the creation of so called as built maps which document the precise location of the fiber plant itself after it's constructed. The next RFP along these lines will be for an inventory management system. We expect that to take place in the weeks ahead. I should also mention here there's not a bullet on the slide that says this, but we continue to work closely to assist and support Caltrans as needed on their GOC and CMGC bidding processes that were discussed both by Janice Benson and Mark Monroe earlier in the meeting. We can go to the next slide, please. Uh, as was also referenced by Mark Monroe, we're continuing to work on the business model and planning process and progress with both of those things...um, working quite a bit right now on the initial go to market plan. We've been focusing over the last several weeks on revenue projections and analysis work as part of that business model, and we expect to complete the initial version of revenue projections along with go-to-market planning and deliver that to CDT by the end of this month. Just a reminder here, this business model process both in terms of refining the operational expenses and the revenue projections, it's an iterative process

as it is in any business, and it will continue on for quite some time. Uh, as we gain more experience and have an opportunity to be more precise in both our cost projections and revenue projections, and manage to those very closely. It's also worth mentioning here, we're starting to focus quite a bit more now at Golden State Net on bringing on additional internal staff. A fiber planning manager will be hired in the weeks ahead. This individual will take a direct hand at helping to manage the planning and construction process. It is ongoing in-house from our perspective. We also will be working on placing a few business development roles in the months ahead to assist in network development activity via dark fiber, or joint build, or acquisition potentially of some systems out there that could be made part of this middle mile network, as well as business development professionals to work on marketing and do outreach that leads to actual sales once there are segments of the network brought up and ready for production service. And we will also be adding internal staff for network engineering support with all of the execution activity that's anticipated of course, as you already know, we have a growing number of outside resources or outsourcing resources we have been using for engineering outside plant expertise, and the like that's coming both from our contracting engineering firm Tilson, as well as directly from CENIC. But that activity is quite horizontal in nature and continues to grow. And uh, the time is approaching where we will need to have some additional engineering resources working under our CTO Ron Hutchins to help coordinate all of that activity in a horizontal sense. Uh, I think I heard one of the staff members from CDT mentioned the other day that at its peak, there could be as many as ninety-three concurrent crews out there across the state working to construct this network. That's a lot of activity in the field and requires a levels of oversight and decision-making obviously as that work is going on, so we're adding more internal staff in anticipation of really this entire program bulking up in the months ahead and continuing on through 2026 as far as developing the network to completion and production status. That concludes my report from Golden State Net. Would certainly be happy to answer any questions anyone here might have.

Thank you, Mr. Naughtin. And also thank you for your partnership. Golden State Net is a pivotal part as our third party administrator to design and build and operate this network ultimately. So, thank you very much.

Thank you, Director...appreciate the comments.

And I'd like to open it up to any committee members that have questions. I see none. Thank you very much. I'd also like to thank and acknowledge, we have Senator Lena Gonzalez on um, so we will record her as present. So, thank you very much Senator Gonzalez for joining us today. And our last program update is going to be from the California Public Utilities Commission, Michael Minkus.

Good morning. I'm Michael Minkus with the Broadband Infrastructure Branch and the California Public Utilities Commission, the CPUC's Communications Division. I will be providing today's update on a number of the CPUC's Last Mile Broadband programs. Next slide, please. This slide provides a summary of the local agency technical assistance broadband and grant program. The fifty million dollar grant program for local agencies and tribes with a five million dollar set aside for tribes provides grants of up to one million dollars to plan for and start broadband infrastructure projects to serve their communities. as CPUC President Reynolds shared at the start of the meeting, as of this week forty technical assistance grants have been awarded for a total of almost nineteen million dollars. The grants fund work in 27 counties and 13 cities and towns. Thus far, seventy-two total applications have been received for a total of almost thirty-three million. Applications are still being accepted in monthly windows. Next slide, please. Among the last mile initiatives is the Loan Loss Reserve Program, providing financial

support for public networks. The seven hundred and fifty million dollar program provides credit enhancements to assist local governments, tribes, and nonprofits, and securing private financing to construct and operate new public fiber networks. A comment proposal was issued in September opening comments have been filed, and reply comments are due next week. On Tuesday, November 8th, from 9-11 AM, the CPUC will host a virtual public meeting for parties on the Loan Loss Reserve proposal and program. More information is available on the CPUC Loan Loss Reserve Fund webpage and information will be distributed to parties on the service list. Next slide, please. This slide provides a snapshot of the CPUC's last mile activities to implement last mile broadband initiative programs. For the broadband technical assistant program on the left, applications continue to be accepted monthly. For the Loan Loss Reserve program, the next activities will stem from the proposal out for comment now, and the Tuesday, November 8th public meeting. On the last mile initiative Federal funding account, and briefly, this program will award grants to fund last mile broadband infrastructure projects in every county. We are developing priority areas, and we'll be publicly releasing those areas soon prior to accepting applications. On the right, this suite of California Advanced Services Fund programs or CASF, the CPUC will continue to award submitted adoption, consortia, and public housing grants for pending applications. A CASF infrastructure account proposed decision is out for comment and applications continue to be accepted for adoption and public housing grants. The current application window for each program closes January 1, 2023. For more information on these grant opportunities, you can visit the public web pages, links for which are included in these slides and the previous, and the MMAC slides, and we can respond to inquiries and provide contacts for each of the grant programs for those who email statewidebroadband@cpuc.ca.gov. Thank you and that concludes my remarks.

Thank you, Mr. Minkus. I see Assembly Member Wood has a question.

Yes, thank you, and thank you for the update. As I was looking at the map of entities that have applied for technical assistance, I noticed a huge hole in the map...uh, an area on the north that that concerns me. Are you reaching...are you doing...what kind of outreach are you doing to solicit this? Because you know in that area in particular when you look at Trinity County, Siskiyou, others...a lot of tribal entities there. So, are...is there direct outreach for...to solicit applications, or how are people getting to understand that this is even an available opportunity?

Yeah, thank you for the question. We've done quite a bit of direct outreach both to California tribes in general and to the cities and counties that are eligible and sort of the most likely applicants and continue to accept applications so hopefully, we update it every week, so hopefully those gaps are filled soon, and there's a number of ways we've worked with our local government liaisons to make sure that there was awareness. We've received inquiries from across the State, continue to do workshops with eligible cities and counties on how to apply, and how to get through the application so hopefully you will be comforted by the number of applications that come in too.

I guess...what I'm, I guess what I was after is what's the nature of the outreach? Is it emails, is it I mean, I'll just say in some of you know, direct touch is going to be really important in some of these areas where there are already the people that might be applying for technical assistance might have three other jobs in a county or three other um...these...I just noticed that as a real, those are really underserved areas, number one. And number two, there are areas that have huge need typically for technical assistance. So, the fact they haven't applied is concerning to me, and it feels like there's a disconnect somewhere.

Really want to highlight and appreciate that question, and I'll maybe respond briefly, and it looks like, uh...President Reynolds would like to add in, but just want to acknowledge that the technical assistance is as you noted to fund you know, those entities and departments where one person might be wearing three hats, one of which is to provide broadband to the entire county. But with that President Reynolds, do you have something add?

Sure. Yeah, thank you. I just want to note Assembly Member that the PUC staff is working very closely with our RCRC and so there has been quite a bit of contact there as the various counties get organized to submit their applications. There's been a lot of you know, personal touches I guess with RCRC and working very closely with that organization. We'll take this back though, I think that you know I don't believe it's a lack of awareness, but we will certainly check that. But maybe there's something that we can do for additional support and encouragement for applications to come in.

And I guess my point is those are areas that are probably in the highest need of technical assistance, and the fact they haven't applied worries me and makes me wonder, you know is there some other factors? There's something we're missing here.

Exactly, yeah so again I don't think it's that they don't know, but there might be some barrier we can work to overcome.

Great, thank you.

Thank you for the question.

All right. Do I have any other questions for the Public Utilities Commission? All right. Before we go to public comment, I'd like to also open it up again up to any committee members that may have general questions or would like to make comments. Assembly Member Wood? No? Okay. Um...Secretary Tong.

Yes, I think yeah, maybe just a bit of a pile on um...again, happy to talk with the multiple partnering agency here including GSN, I know you guys are also outside talking to a lot of the entities. But uh, you know whether that is CPUC or Caltrans, um...just to emphasize on that local touch, and I do know the Mr. Adams is also working with CPUC and partners to do a lot more on site. I heard there could be up to twenty visits coming up to local communities, especially the tribal community to you know, really engage them not only to outreach in terms of opportunities coming up, but hearing firsthand a lot of that technical assistance is going to be highly welcomed, and we know that broadband even though it's a topic for a long time, but now that with the influx of funding, how do you get to those funding, how do you submit applications, what are the things needs to be consider. I do recognize there is a shortage of that knowledge out there, so happy to maybe talk to more with CPUC, CDT, Caltrans, GSN to see how we could provide a larger group of resources to provide these technical assistance to those community that surely need this in order for them to submit successful applications.

Thank you, Secretary. All right. It looks like we are moving to public comment. Mr. Przybyla, will you please provide the public comments guideline and begin the public comment process?

In order to ensure everyone who wishes to make public comment has the opportunity to do so, we respectfully request one person per entity, and two minutes per person. The order of the public comment will be online public comment submissions prior to the meeting; Zoom hands raised; phone hands raised via *9. We have not received any public comment submissions prior

to our meeting. So, we will start with public comments via Zoom. Please raise your hand, and we will unmute you. First name, I see is Liza. Liza, you may now unmute.

Good morning, everyone. And thank you for this meeting. I'm Liza Massey. I am in Marin County. I am just so happy to see this. I, too, uh, was really excited to see that some of the fiber is already being laid. I also appreciate the fact that once Marin County got involved with GSN and the Department of Technology, we got a lot of attention and we're able to negotiate additional fiber, and Marin County...it just made sense in our rural area. In terms of the grant applications and getting to those areas that have not submitted, I would say that Marin County was lucky to find some funding to hire a fixed term grant analyst who helped us. We also help the city of San Rafael apply, they would not have been able to without our help. But actually, we're pretty much doing a lot of it, and we're helping a couple of other towns and cities, so I don't know if that's a model that could work. Um, I certainly you know my staff is overwhelmed. But I think the counties helping cities or neighboring counties helping with templates and lessons learned is one suggestion I would make. The second one is what was really difficult for Marin County, and I talked to my peers and other counties is the fact that you had to have a vendor proposal already in place in order to apply for a lot of grant. So, the time to do an RFP, if you're required or to get proposals, we were lucky we could just ask a consultant to do the proposal for the studies. It is really, I think, one of the bigger barriers, and I just wonder if there's a way to assist organizations, or you know, counties and cities. With that because I have a feeling that is a stumbling block and we have heard that, my team and I, as we talked to other city officials and county staff. So again, thank you.

Thank you for your public comment. Next public comment will be from Patrick. Patrick, you now can unmute.

Good morning. My name is Patrick. I'm the project director from Oakland Undivided, and I'd like to open by expressing our community's gratitude for the ongoing engagement with state and regional partners. Special thanks to Scott and Mark for facilitating regular meetings with Department of Transportation District 4 to explore opportunities to expedite our deployment timeline and for providing clarity on the role of IRUs in our network. Oakland's number one priority is fully utilizing the State's transformative investment in open access middle mile infrastructure to serve our digitally red lined communities and our thirty-seven thousand unconnected households therein. Oakland recently submitted our application for the state's TA grant to update our master fiber optic plan and digital equity plan to align the efforts of our diverse coalition and move forward with intention and deliberate speed. As the State moves into the execution phase and Oakland strategizes to bridge our digital divide within the next five years, we look forward to additional information on how the State defines open access. The information will be critical to our planning process. The limited backhaul available in pockets of Oakland is prohibitively expensive and we hope this public investment spurs competition, improves quality, and empowers municipalities by interlinking networks and connecting anchor institutions to better serve our constituents. We will closely follow business update from the business model from Golden State Net, and through our ongoing engagement we hope to answer questions that include how will strands be allocated to interested last mile providers, including incumbent ISPs, wireless providers, nonprofits, and municipalities. What are the terms of use for tapping into these strands? Specifically, how can we ensure last mile providers offer the most affordable and robust connectivity to the end user? And finally, what is the pricing model to access strands? And will rates differ by market or by user? Again, we are supremely grateful for the ongoing engagement. And look forward to proving the possible here in Oakland. Thanks again, y'all, and have a great weekend.

Thank you for your public comment. Next public comment will be from Walter. Walter, you can now unmute.

Hello, and thank you for the time for everybody. I have more of a question. I was hoping the PUC representative, if uh, if the Chairwoman would allow, could give a little more detail to what it means by priority areas within the Federal funding account, and how these areas, once released, will be differentiated from other applications to the FFA program.

So, Walter, I know we don't typically do questions, but it is a clarifying piece of information. I would just go back to Mr. Minkus, is that something you'd like to provide now, or would you like to provide at a later time? All right, Walter, it looks like we've lost um, mister...um...the CPUC...oh...uh. President Reynolds.

Thank you, Chair Bailey-Crimmins. We do have Mr. Minkus is still on. But I just wanted to say, the question really goes to the Last Mile Funding program, and it...you know, we'd be happy to provide more information. And we will be doing outreach on the priority areas in that program. We can provide some more here, but I think it's a larger question that we could probably delve into in another forum. I guess my understanding is that you know, if we want to do another presentation, maybe we could bring it back and talk about the last mile program, but defer to you, and I'll let Mr. Minkus add in, if he has any.

Thanks, President Reynolds. Nothing to add, and uh, certainly...uh, Walter Hughes or others, please follow-up with the statewide broadband or with our web page and we can answer specific questions and direct you to the latest and greatest public information.

Thank you. We'll go ahead back to public comment.

Thank you, Director. And thank you for your comment. We have looks like one more comment. Martha, you now can unmute.

Thank you. This is Martha Van Runyan from the Inland Empire Regional Broadband Consortium, and I just wanted to give some feedback on the Lotta program. It appears that it is very needed, and there is a lot of interest in the Inland Empire eligible entities to apply. It's been brought to my attention this week that some of the agencies are concerned that the funding will run short, and they won't get their act together in time to be able to participate. So, I let our consortium know that I would provide feedback to the PUC so, this is a good forum to do it, that there needs to...there may need to be a look at the staff level of potentially adding additional funding if it's possible to the account. I also believe that the public outreach will generate more and more interest. The existing grants, as they become successfully implemented, will create more interest in the program and provide more vision and imagination within the agencies that have never been able to fund broadband planning that they will get very excited and interested in new opportunities to solve the crisis in especially the rural areas that were brought up that have not been applying. I've been doing a lot of outreach in the rural areas, and it really comes down to lack of capacity, lack of being able to write the grants. The issue that came up about the RFP process for public agencies, the local agency technical assistance program is geared towards public agencies. Public agencies have a procurement process that typically requires RFPs...request for proposals. This has been an issue for a long time in that having a contractor on board before a grant is awarded is very difficult for a city council or for a county government. They typically get the grant, and then do an RFP to procure for the secured funds that they have. They don't typically put staff efforts into procuring for consultants when they do not have a budget to perform that work or to bring someone on. So, I just want to support the comment that

maybe something looking at the procurement and how the government agencies really work would help bring more people or more agencies and eligible entities into the program. And then just you know, encouragement if there could be additional funding added to the account, I have had some agency say, well, it looks like the money is all going to be used up by the time we get ourselves together and understand what we can put in for so I'm not sure if we should put in because you know, we may not make it in time. And I have encouraged them don't worry about that, put your application in, do not get discouraged by anything about the budget. Perhaps it will show the state how much interest and energy is needed to be put towards this issue, and more funding will be allocated. But of course, I can't promise that. But I'm very encouraging to just keep moving forward. But again, when you go to rural areas that have an extreme problem being connected, they have a hard time with finding the funds to actually put the application in, understanding the very technical application...it's a streamlined application, but it is technical, and it does require an outcome of implementation or at least a hopeful outcome of implementation of broadband. And so, it's a big stretch from never doing broadband planning to having an outcome, and they do feel they need a consultant, and that procurement process does have to happen for many of them. So, thank you for hearing me on that. It's a very good program. And uh, our region supports it. We have four applications in, more on the way and we're just hoping that the program stays in place and can get more funding. Thank you.

Oh, and I have one more little...I have one more.

I apologize...um, Martha, you have used up your two minutes.

Oh, I didn't mean to...okay, thank you, I...uh.

No, you're perfectly fine. Thank you very much for your public comment.

Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you.

And with that Chair Bailey-Crimmins, I do not see any more hands raised, and so we will close public comment.

Alright, thank you very much. It looks like Mr. Minkus, you've raised your hand.

Very briefly. I want to be mindful of the process, but would just encourage folks with questions about the Local Agency Technical Assistance Program or any others to reach out to the program contacts. And, for example, there should be no requirement to have a complete 'Request for Proposal' or other procurement in place. So please, if there are questions or concerns, reach out.

Thank you, Mr. Minkus for providing clarity there. All right. We will open it up to committee members. Any final comments before we adjourn today's meeting? Alright. I see none. So, thank you for the committee members, presenters, and attendees for this...for their contributions today, we've made significant progress month over month. Our next meeting is Friday, November 18th from 10-11:30 AM. Please note that this will be the last MMAC meeting for the year we have...uh, we will not be having a December meeting. So, with that, we will wish everyone well and adjourn today's MMAC meeting, thank you.

Thank you.