



Washtenaw County Broadband Task Force
Established by the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners
Working to Achieve Countywide Broadband Equity by 2022



MEDIA RELEASE

September 16, 2021

For Immediate Release

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WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ALLOCATE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN FUNDING TO ACHIEVE COUNTYWIDE BROADBAND EQUITY

WASHTENAW COUNTY, MI- At their meeting last evening, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners approved funding that will close the digital divide in the entirety of the county and achieve 100% high speed broadband internet access to every home. \$14.6 million in American Rescue Plan funds were obligated by the Board, which, when coupled with recent broadband grant awards, will allow digital infrastructure to be built and offered to every residence, regardless of address.

“This is a huge win for every resident of Washtenaw County’, states Barbara Fuller, Chair of the Washtenaw County Broadband Task Force. ‘The Board of Commissioners tasked us with achieving countywide broadband equity more than 5 years ago, and here we are! I’m grateful for their collective leadership and willingness to acknowledge that access to reliable high speed broadband internet service is a necessity, and then provide the funding to help those who would have otherwise been left behind. All Washtenaw County residents will soon have the ability to virtually learn, stay in touch with family, benefit from telemedicine and telebanking and so much more. This is truly life-changing, for so many.”

District 1 Commissioner and member of the Broadband Task Force Jason Maciejewski added, “Allocating funds to make the broadband infrastructure available to all Washtenaw County residents is a transformational moment. Tele-health services, educational access, work-from-home opportunities, and the ability to accomplish everyday tasks online will become available countywide. I am proud of the hard

work and dedication of the Broadband Task Force and appreciative of the support from all of my fellow County Commissioners. Their collective determination to bridge the digital divide in our county is truly remarkable. This is what local government is all about, positively impacting people's lives."

Another member of the Broadband Task Force, Shannon Beeman, and District 3 Commissioner states, "Allocating \$14.6 million of our \$72 million American Rescue Funds was a big ask; we had some difficult conversations, but maintained open lines of communication, which got us to where we are today."

Vice Chair of the Broadband Task Force and Lyndon Township resident Ben Fineman summarizes the feelings of the group by stating, "As Lyndon Township has just recently completed its broadband construction, I can attest to how much it improves the quality of life, for everyone. I am grateful for the commitment from each of the members of the Broadband Task Force, their work to gather the information our County Commissioners used to make this historic decision required immense commitment to finding a solution. Funding digital accessibility is the right thing to do as it will provide countless opportunities for those who have been denied access for far too long."

In the short term, the Broadband Task Force will now engage with ISP providers to develop a construction/implementation schedule that meets the requirements of the American Rescue Plan Act and update their [webpage](#) as information is available and timelines are identified.

Long term goals of the Commissioners include ensuring financial factors do not prohibit access to high speed internet as well as digital literacy and educational opportunities for those who may be new to navigating the internet.

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