

BERRIEN COUNTY BROADBAND INTERNET TASK FORCE



September 15, 2022 9:12:30 PM

Berrien County Administration Center, Zoom+

MEETING NOTES

ATTENDEES: Berrien County Commissioner **Teri Freehling**; Berrien County Commissioner **Jim Curran**; Berrien County Commissioner **Ezra Scott**; Berrien County Administrator **Brain Dissette**; Berrien County Corporate Counsel **Thaddeus Hackworth**; Berrien County Community Development Director **Dan Fette**; Berrien County Information Systems (IS) Director **Chris Swihart**; Berrien County Geographical Information Systems (GIS) Director **Lex Winans**; Berrien County GIS Mapping Specialist **Helen DeMarsh**; Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) Executive Director **John Egelhaaf**; DCS Technology Design **Chris Scharrer**; Weesaw Township **James Pelletier**.

- I. **DCS BRIEFING & STATUS UPDATE.** Chris Scharrer from [DCS Technology Design](#) briefed the group on the countywide parcel-by-parcel mapping project of internet technologies. Field Work is complete. Mapping is complete. What remains, and is almost complete, is the project analysis and executive summary to include deployment recommendations. Once the final study is complete, the study will provide Berrien County with a report-based framework that will be used to help us sort through and understand the various technologies available, along with notable highlights in gaps of coverage in areas that do not have availability. This will to aid in planning and working with potential funding sources and ISP's. The report will be technical in nature and compiled in a format that is informative for all readers. This report is an accurate snapshot of what technologies are available across the county, down to the parcel level. The report will include technical descriptions, charts, and most important, Geographical Information Systems (GIS) based maps of the entire county showing a very precise inventory of what is available to businesses and homeowners. The maps will provide a level of detail and granularity that is not typically available elsewhere. The GIS data files are being made available to the County for our use and can be easily maintained and updated as needed. GIS is working with DCS to integrate GIS mapping data for interactive mapping availability to public. Reliable broadband mapping is critical to understanding the areas where broadband access is lacking. The mapping and parcel-by-parcel inventory provided by DCS Technology is not based on the self-reporting 477 data provided to the FCC by the internet provider. This is a boots-on-the-ground 12-week study of what is hanging on the poles, in the ground, or installed on a tower.

- II. **ST. JOSEPH TO BUCHANAN MIDDLE MILE GRANT APPLICATION.** Administrator Dissette, John Egelhaaf (SWMPC), and Chris Swihart (IS) have been meeting to discuss a dedicated fiber-line linking from St. Joseph to 500 Circle Drive in Buchanan. At this time, The Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program, a grant that provides funding high-speed network, is being pursued. Deadline is September 30, 2022. This is a quick turnaround.

- III. **ANCHOR INSTITUTION SUB-COMMITTEE.** Administrator Dissette presented a draft agenda for the upcoming Anchor Institution Sub-Committee Meeting. This collaboration will allow the identification of needs and partnerships and establish a cadence of communication with anchor institutions in a roundtable format.

- IV. **MISCELLANEOUS.** Next meeting is September 29th.