Blandin Broadband Communities

People + Process

Agenda

- Welcome
  - Jayne Gibson
  - Bernadine Joselyn
- Vision Meeting Report
  - Bill Coleman
- Additional Input
  - Open discussion
- Project Idea Generation
  - In small groups
- Group Reporting
  - Round robin reporting by group leaders
- Additional Ideas and Discussion
- Next Steps
- Adjourn

Community Opportunity

Creatively & responsibly allocate and spend up to $100,000 on community-benefitting technology projects

Vision & Brainstorm

Design and Budget

Implement

Track & Evaluate

Achieving BBC Success
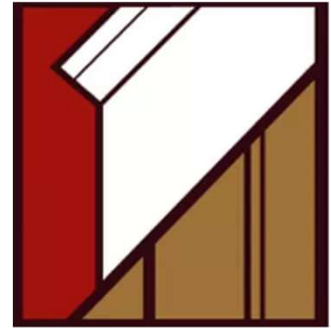
The Intelligent Community Framework
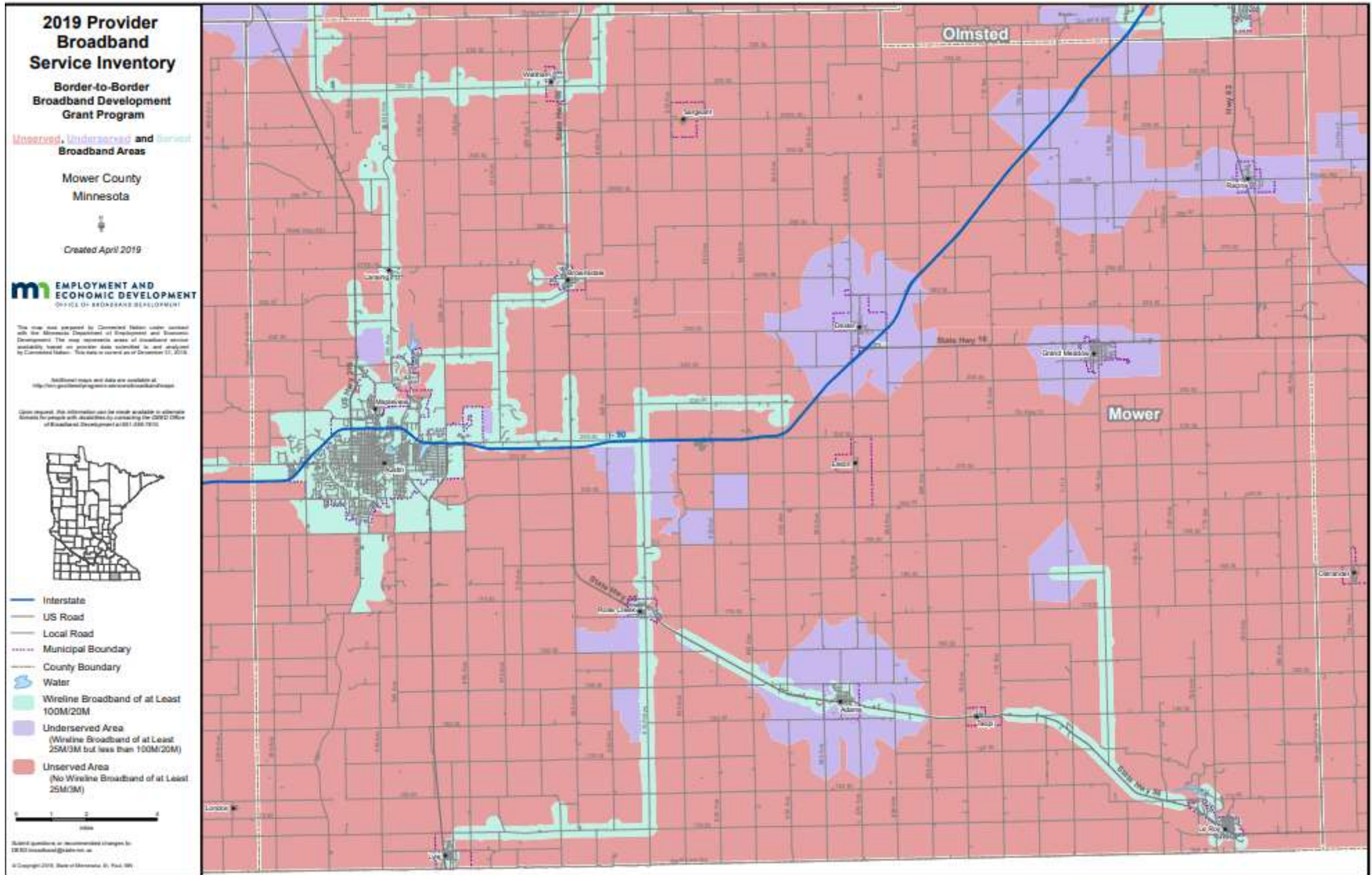

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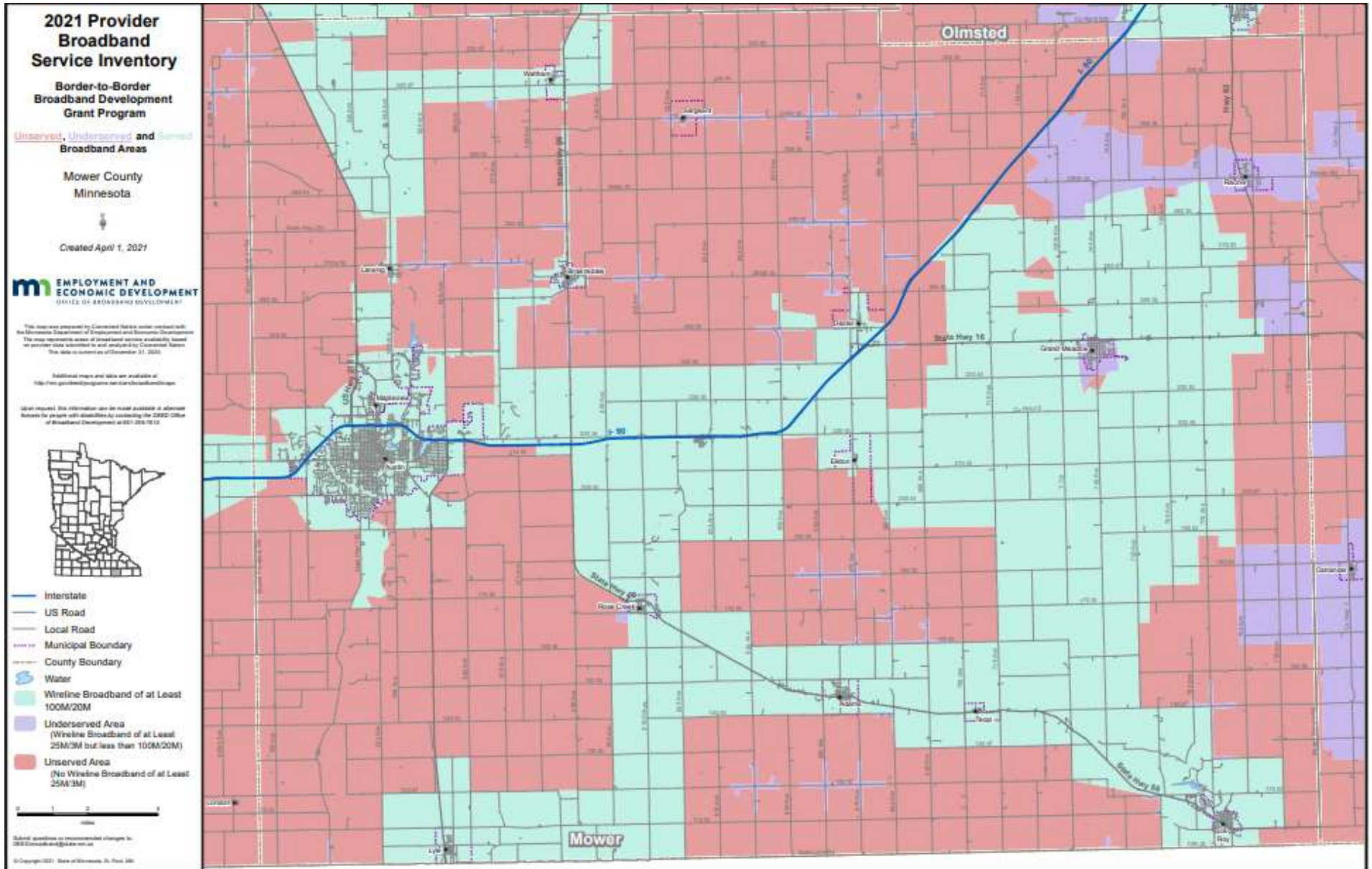# Our Broadband Story
Julie Clinefelter

- 2019/2021 Broadband Service Inventory
  - School reports many kids outside city limits
- Free Wifi availability
  - Library- grant based
  - School- grant based
  - Community
- Future opportunities
- Key issue may be affordability, not availability

Our Broadband Story

Our Broadband Story

Community Survey Response

- *We do a lot with digital outreach through social media, our webpage, and utilize online and cloud-based resources, so a broadband connection is necessary.*

- *Interrupted connection or important stakeholders who do not have access are unable to collaborate and share voice*

- *I have internet access to my home, but it is impacted by demand. Certain times of the day it is very slow.*

- *We use Spectrum for our Internet services and rely on this service to run our server and POS workstations. We have experienced outages and other problems that affect our business.*

- *We are not hindered but our monthly expense is high*

- *There would be no working from home without it. There would be no way to communicate in a timely manner with medical, mental health and school needs. We cannot function efficiently or effectively without it.*

Assets	Barriers / Gaps
Additional provider coming into Austin will provide competition **Previous work by V2020**	Not available to everyone (not available in most rural areas)
	Some of what is advertised as broadband isn't (CenturyLink)
	Depending on time of day (use by others) even broadband isn't always what is promised
	Upload speeds aren't good even when you have higher speed.
	Technical support is weak from providers
	Service consistency is highly variable
	Cellular coverage is also weak in many areas making other options not viable

Desired Outcomes

- Minimum 100 Mb download and 50 Mb upload speed minimums available to everyone
    - Requires coverage to everyone
    - Guarantees from providers (with independent monitoring) and penalties to providers that don't perform
- Affordable price
- Need to continue to add competition

Our Workforce Story
Mike Postma

- We have a growing business community in town
  - Hormel Foods, Mayo Clinic, Nu –Tek
  - All are cutting edge industries with need for broadband
- We have a workforce shortage & the only solution is to add more people to Mower County
  - Need to have the amenities they are looking for
  - Coworker who moved back from Ashville, NC to but family homestead in rural Mower, couldn't get internet

Workforce
DEVELOPMENT, INC.
The Workforce Development Board of Southeast Minnesota

Our Workforce Story
Mike Postma

Broad disparity when broken down by race

- 90% of all population in Mower homes have a PC
  - 10% of those don't have broadband

- Black population of 1115: 87% have a PC
  - 24% don't have broadband

- Multi race population of 860: 99% have a PC
  - 37% of them don't have broadband

Source MNDEED 2019

Workforce
DEVELOPMENT, INC.
The Workforce Development Board
of Southeast Minnesota

Our Workforce Story
Mike Postma

Job applications are almost all online

- Having internet access with working email key to getting and responding to companies looking to hire

- Technology literacy is constantly evolving
  - taking even a year or 2 off from having internet can result in world passing you by

- Think about how many new tech habits you've developed since March 2020

Workforce
DEVELOPMENT, INC.
The Workforce Development Board
of Southeast Minnesota

Community Survey Response

- *I don't know about it but I know we need it.*

- *Systems and structures are in place, but a sustainable platform to create great connection will accelerate the work*

- *Austin has a growing school system with ongoing investment in facilities and support for education beyond high school. This can hopefully lead to more high school graduates staying in the area.*

- *The Austin area is positioned well by having a fortune 500 company in its town, community support and the Hormel Foundation to help support and have a high-quality of workforce. There is also a variety of workforce opportunities ranging from lower to higher level positions and degrees.*

- *Austin has many opportunities in the workforce, many of which are high-quality.*

Assets	Barriers / Gaps
Ability to hire best people for the job, broad geographic area	Not having the appropriate level of broadband to do your work
We have big name employers that people would move to work for … expectation of specific amenities	People have to go to great lengths to get broadband
	May have to move to a different place to get the broadband you need for your job.
Assurance scholarships – people would move to this community to have.	Could lose people moving here w/o broadband amenities
	Need universal access for online learning.
Have good higher education opportunities	Language barriers, digital literacy
School connection with local employers	Socioeconomic status as it relates to digital literacy (e.g. phones disconnected, have to start over)
Options for online learning	Threat of losing talent
	Lack of people interested in working (need more of the "right kind" of people – skills, age, etc)
	What makes people move here? Appropriate housing, family activities available, lifestyle, community amenities

Desired Outcomes

- Appropriate level of broadband access for all.

- Emphasis on youth – build technology skills, online learning in all areas (welding, farm machiney)

- Technology skills for all ages on how to apply for jobs, get connected to work remotely

- Local hub for the county to help people figure out what their options are for broadband (vs. people having to figure it out for themselves)

- Navigator program similar to Austin Aspires/school open to all who struggle with technology.

- Eliminate "I don't do computers" from job applicants … digital literacy for all … options for people at all levels of technology literacy

- Look for ways to minimize technology intimidation

Include

Digital equity means computers, skills, and access for all!

Our Digital Equity Story
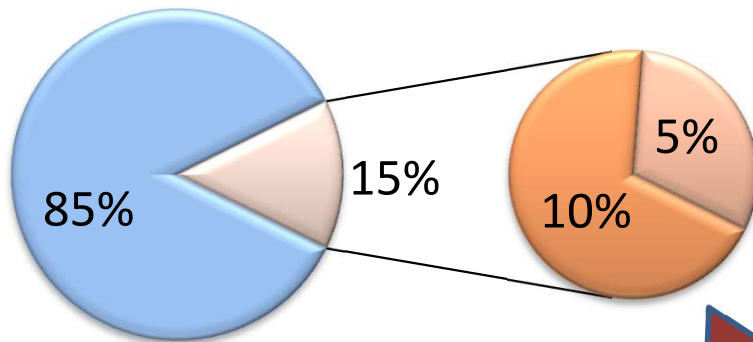## Kristi Beckman and Nitaya Jandragholica

- Access to internet and devices
  - Mower County Senior Center report many seniors don't have access to broadband
- Digital Literacy
  - Classes being offered in Spanish at Austin Public Library
  - Community Tech Navigator from Austin Aspires

Digital Equity/Digital Literacy in the Justice Program

- How does digital equity and digital literacy impact people who are navigating the criminal justice system either as a defendant or a victim?

- Does access and digital literacy play any role in justice outcomes?

Mower County Court Hearings 2020

Total Court Hearings with and without Interpreters.

85%   15%   10%   5%

- Hearings without Interpreters
- Hearings with Interpreters
- In person Interpreters
- Remote Interpreters

Pre pandemic 4 % of hearings were remote - Post pandemic 71%

Jails are set up to hold Zoom hearings to minimize transport and COVID exposure.

We do have one or more Zoom Rooms and tablets within each courthouse that **allows a person without technology to come to the courthouse and use that tablet to attend their hearing.**

The inherent disadvantages for ELL are exacerbated by additional challenges which include: • Lack of awareness that courts are available and open for business. • Technology barriers such as: Lack of access to computers; public sites where patrons can use and learn how to use computer equipment, such as libraries, are limited. Lack of internet access for financial or geographic reasons. Lack of a smart phone or sufficient "minutes" on the usage plan. Etc.

Community Survey Response

- *My wife is a teacher and I know access was a challenge during the earlier part of the pandemic when kids were communicating with teachers from home. My wife's EL students in particular struggled.*

- *There are families who do not have access to internet, or the service does not meet their needs, the schools and Austin Public Library have been provided hundreds of hotspot to student so that they could be educated.*

- *Often financial limitations are the cause of unequal access to technology and the internet. I also see older people who can afford it but lack the skills to use it to it's potential.....*

- *Technology is very expensive. There are many families that cannot afford internet. This makes it hard for families to receive communications sent via email from businesses, schools etc. This creates a divide because much information is sent this way.*

- *Yet the proportion of U.S. adults with no computer experience is much higher for immigrants, the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) found, at almost 21% compared to approximately 5% for non-immigrants.*

Assets	Barriers / Gaps
• **Professional workforce diversity/multilingual** • **Made diversity a priority in our community** • **Good communication between agencies, schools, businesses, etc.** • **Community resources to go into the homes of diverse communities** • **Places in town like library and schools providing devices for keeping connected** • **Resources available and people willing to look for other options** • **Welcome Center (Community Action Building combo with PRC and Children's Dental)**	• Asking those who need help what they need, not assuming, what areas do we have most need • Need for zoom meeting rooms in community (ask those who need them where they would be most helpful) • More multi lingual people in our buildings • Differentiate the communication we send out • Need more small group or 1:1 help (digital navigation) • Economics needs to be stressed. Affordability of service is a huge problem.

Desired Outcomes

• More digital navigators and strategic places of contact to train out those who are already assisting. Really need 1:1.

• Using bilingual students who need volunteer hours for Austin Assurance to get the training so that they can get those hours and help out.

• Something set up to help those who need help financially to gain access. (language skills, but also to help those who are undocumented)

• Community infrastructure (trusted navigators) to help people get signed up for things like EBB (digital access resource)

• Paying back old phone bills so people could get internet provider service? Gift cards for community members who need access.

• Improving trust with the community (building those trusted navigators)

• Website or someplace (someone) to keep all the information in one place

• Community training on how to link people with who they need? (How to do it in a non-condescending way.)

Innovation

Innovation refers to doing new things and doing old things in new and better ways

Our Innovation Story

John Garry, Wendy Anderson, Juan Molina

Community Survey Response

- *Mayo, the schools and other businesses in Austin have utilized tech systems such as Zoom and Schoology during the pandemic in order to provide services families and elders.*

- *Mental and physical health providers provide telehealth appointments which reduces stress for those who need transportation and mobility support.*

- *The EAT DRINK SHOP Austin Facebook page is a good example of businesses banding together to promote what they have, build each other up and support each other for the good of the community.*

- *Quality inexpensive internet is not an option anymore. All businesses need it.*

- *I don't think there's anything particularly innovative about how Austin area businesses and industries use technology. It would be interesting to have a competitions/contests -- 1) best current innovative use of technology by a small business 2) best new idea for innovative use of technology by a small business. Brainstorming here...this would help us understand what the issues and ideas are.*

Assets	Barriers / Gaps
Metronet by summer 2022	Knowledge of what is possible with better broadband
Health Care pushed by COVID on how care is delivered.	Important to distinguish the audience because of wide range of Austin's diversity
Schools learned k-4 education with more immediate feedback and engagement.	Tech literacy at the family level is often behind the child level
Opportunity to be more purposeful with technology (rather than just screen time).	So many things that are visible (patient portal at Mayo is example) is only available in English
Flexibility	Free classes on how to use a computer (if it is available – need more awareness)
Diversity is considerable in Austin	
Well-educated professional who have seen other communities and can bring them to Austin	
Institute has amazing technology	
Retailer are learning new ways to do business	
Riverland access to education	
Forward thinking about how to offer programming.	

Desired Outcomes
- Free classes on how to use a computer
- Increased innovative entrepreneurial ecosystem with world-class technology (co-wrking space as hub)
- Computer in every home – capable, ready for the future
- Small business technology resiliency upgrades and innovative use competition/contest

Sustainability is economic development with the future in mind

Our Sustainability Story
Luke Reese

- Hormel Nature Center
  - What the HNC has done:
    - Solar panels, geothermal HVAC, and bird glass
    - Land management:
      - Local, watershed, and regional contexts
    - Environmental education
  - Future opportunities:
    - DC fast chargers for EVs
    - Remember the trees

Community Survey Response

- *The Utilities has many programs to help people improve energy efficiency and lower water use. I think cost, knowledge of the programs, and a lack of understanding of why they are necessary are all barriers.*

- *Solar power is one way; however, this can make it hard as well as many solar panels are needed to keep businesses running.*

- *I have not heard of any*

Assets	Barriers / Gaps
Hormel Nature Center	City is cutting down more trees than replacing 2:1. This is impacting low income neighborhoods more than others for multiple reasons – one is that people who can afford to do so, buy their own trees.
Soil & Water Conservation District	
Friends of the Nature Center	Emerald ash bore is working its way here
Spruce Up Austin	Nurseries selling trees that are on invasive species list such as Norway maple – need them to know what are the best trees for our area and sell them
Austin Audubon Society	
Isaak Walton League	City buys trees at end of year – gets low price but not buying the trees with the species diversity that is needed
Pheasants Forever	
U of M Extension Partnerships	Do not have a thoughtful, informed, county wide forest/tree plan
4-H	
Ag Society	
Largest producer of wind in the state	
Two large solar projects on line	
Austin Public Utilities is an active partner in clean water, electrifying homes, etc	
County has active clean water program through ordinances, education, & partnerships	
4th Ave Fest Programming	
Aquatic Invasive Species programming	
Canoe mobile project	
1st. Gravel bed nursery created in 2021	

Desired Outcomes

- Implement No Child Left Indoors Program in 2022

- Create gravel bed nursery in Austin at the Fair Grounds and provide template for other communities in the county to replicate

- Shift the model of cutting down 2, planting 1 to cutting down 2, planting 3.

- Educate the community about why trees matter

- Educate community about why getting outdoors matters

- Educate community about the role that environmental sustainability plays in economic development

Our Community Engagement Story
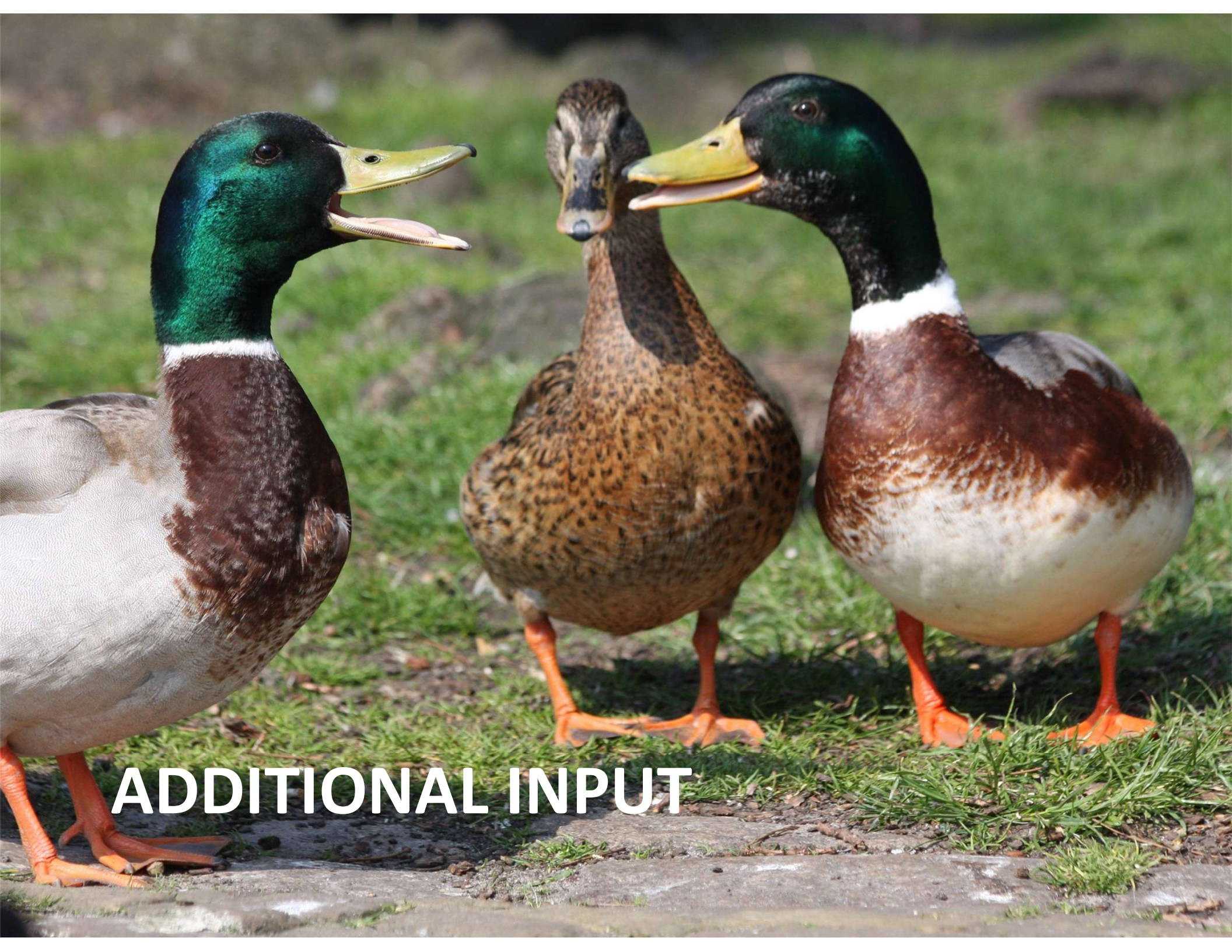
- Austin Public Schools

Community Survey Response

- *We use print advertising, weekly radio, social media, our website, and a semiannual newsletter to communicate with the Austin area.*

- *Our diversity is our strength. Have the young train the old on tech and the internet. Have the young observe and work with the middle aged in careers to gain exposure and experience. Have those that speak the language mentor those that are new to our culture/language and traditions.*

- *We need to make sure Austin area has affordable access to technology and investments should be in that area. Having areas such as the library, maybe YMCA etc be places or hubs for people to go to access technology easily.*

- *Greater access to resources and community connection*

- *Quality and affordable housing, childcare*

Assets	Barriers / Gaps
Lots of different hubs (library, etc)	Training—from people they trust
Willingness of families to participate and grow in understanding	Trust and mistrust
Good networks	Resources
Major willingess to help groups	Not sure how to give the resources to the groups
The areas that do offer training—library, public spaces—could recognition be offered?	Finding space
	Assuming what is needed—not just with racial groups but also people with disabilities, etc.
Success coaches—navigators	Assumptions about people's level of engagement
Some providers are good at responding to issues	Can be fear
	Assuming messages have been received
	Systematic structures to prevent or even discourage engagement?

Desired Outcomes

- Look at the willingness to support—and do some type of a give back

- Anyone who wants to learn something---they would know where to go

- Improved response time from providers

- Place to find out where lack of internet access exists and lack of devices--

- Engage landlords and businesses that want to solve the problem

- Advanced building access—24/7

ADDITIONAL INPUT

Project Idea Generation

- Small Group Discussion
  - Appoint a chair
  - Appoint a recorder/reporter
- Rules
  - Project ideas can be for any Intelligent Community element
  - We want as many ideas as possible
  - We just want the basic idea
    - Not the justification
    - Not the implementation details
    - Not the barriers
  - Take turns

Discussion Group Reporting

- Round Robin Reporting
- Two ideas per group per round
- No repetition please
  - Adding detail/variations OK
- We just want the basic idea
    - Not the justification
    - Not the implementation details
    - Not the barriers

Next Steps

- Organizing ideas
- Project team champions & volunteering/recruiting
- Online project voting
- Further project development
- Budgets and allocations
- Blandin grant application by early January
- Grant approval
- Project implementation
- Additional project development

Adjourn

"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about."

MARGARET J. WHEATLEY

Be sure to vote and volunteer for your favorite projects!