



CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

Information & Technology Services

BDUAC Meeting

Thursday August 6, 2020 4-5:30pm

Location: Zoom
Facilitator: Rick Dietz
Board Attendance: Chris Robb, Mike Trotzke, Tim Pritchett
Staff Attendance: Cassie Werne, Rick Dietz

1) STAFF REPORTS

a) *Administrative Updates*

- i) No updates.

b) *ITS Updates*

- i) [Rick] Infrastructure projects: No updates.
- ii) [Rick] Digital Equity Survey:

- (1) Released the results from the Digital Equity Survey to the public this week. Every organization I have talked to is interested in the data and some are pursuing grant opportunities where this data will be useful to them.

- (2) [Rick] Review key survey findings from Executive Summary:

- (a) **Residents are highly connected.** [Rick] There are options available. The issue is that it may be too costly for a resident or other gaps. They don't know how to secure the service or get it working for them. Focused on corporate boundary of Bloomington.

- (b) **Low-income households are much more likely to lack internet access and many low-income households depend on a smartphone for internet access.** [Rick] Low income households not likely to have internet service. Not surprising, but good to have data to verify that. Related - low income households that do have internet access are limited to using a data plan on a cellular device. This is considered a low bandwidth tier. [Chris] Can we determine if those low income households have children in them? Feels like a highly relevant statistic right now. [Rick] We can tease that out. Raw data has been published on data portal. [Tiim] Working with social workers and principals to get web form filled out - 300 hotspots - 100 on Sprint, 200 on Verizon. 6 wifi buses are going to go out. Wifi access points from schools. In a week and a half - 100 or so applications returned, 25 no internet at all, 20 internet only through phone, 63 poor quality internet. This demonstrates that this will be a struggle if this is going to last. [Rick] How are you distributing access points? [Tim] Had an asset

inventory - they are tagged - checked out and deployed to student. Goes into ziploc bag and then distribute to student - all hands on deck. As many as possible in their possession. Sprint hotspots - 20GB of data/month then throttle. Verizon hotspots - Kajeet - 8GB, but pool across fleet of 200. Pooling bus data on cradlepoint routers on 6 busses. They have a content keeper that filters back on prem - source providers also provide content keeper - Tim will monitor. If it is an issue, will lock down high bandwidth resources on hotspot side. May be a parent phone call - look at logs - your child watched 3000 hours of YouTube and that is why. [Chris] Is this pretty much all you doing this? [Tim] Teachers came back yesterday - will have a more hands on deck feel. Applications from teachers are coming in. Will have help with helpdesk support. May have to determine prioritization if we receive more than 300 applications. [Chris] Are you interested in staff expertise or internet access equipment? [Tim] Staffing I think we should be OK and will let you know. Equipment - outdoor wireless locations. I made a map, it looks really nice, but if it's pouring down rain and a kid can't get there. [Rick] Even if you have gear going, you have all manner of other constraints - weather, trees, etc. [Tim] South Bend did this - but couldn't get data from them. Planning rotations now. Were IU parking lots launched in the Spring remain in the Fall? [Chris] Not sure, but I would guess so.

- (c) Subsidized internet services are not having a significant impact.**
- (d) Caregivers report significant concerns with respect to risks to minor children associated with the internet**
- (e) Many caregivers report lacking the ability to protect minor children from online harms**
- (f) Lower income residents in particular report lacking desired computing skills or sufficient ability to recognize online threats**
- (g) Lower-income residents express somewhat more desire for help gaining online skills and confidence**
- (h) A "homework gap" is a significant problem for those with only lower speed internet.**
- (i) The skills gap is pronounced among low income and older residents.**
- (j) Internet at home is increasingly a critical requirement for middle and higher income work.**
- (k) Lack of need for internet in lower paid/skilled jobs can increase digital inequality.**
- (l) There is broad support for the city having an active role in ensuring affordable broadband.**

(3) [Rick] If you have questions that you think this data can answer, let Rick know and he can put that to the consultants.

(4) [Rick] Recover Forward Initiative from the Mayor - include some of the recommendations from this survey. Talked with CTC.

Recommendations:

- (a) Hire a Digital Equity Specialist - someone who would promote subsidized services of Comcast, AT&T, etc. and engage with targeted communities to try and bring people online. Assist with sign up process. If you are new - provider may not enter home to set up equipment. That may be daunting. Address all of these barriers.
- (b) Establish a Digital Equity Fund - some amount of City dollars that could be allocated through a competitive grants process to the community to address gaps.
- (c) Establish a fund that would be a bulk buy-in for Comcast Internet Essentials program - City would purchase a couple hundred subsidy blocks and be the mediator/facilitator for people getting online.
- (d) Do analysis/feasibility study on City building out fiber to the premise on its own.
- (e) Mayor was interested in grants program and is part of Recover Forward Initiative. These recommendations are not well formed as they are prior to the development of the Digital Equity Strategic Plan.
- (f) [Tim] Are there Cities that have built out fiber network successfully? [Rick] Not in IN. More on the West Coast. Some have fiber networks and operate as an ISP - do this through utility - operate water and power utility already. Already have the pole rights. Electric utilities rolling out smart meters - strung fiber at the same time. A no brainer. Chattanooga, TN is the closest. Built out fiber infrastructure - then Google became a tenant. IN would be particularly challenging for political reasons. AT&T would shut it down. [Chris] Has this attitude shifted at all? Saw a segment on Sunday Morning about this. A message like this on a mass audience show - idea is starting to take hold. [Rick] I don't think there has been any change at the statewide level. What happens with the next federal administration. Obama-era stimulus - did provide a lot of resources to build/expand networks, but left up to state to determine how that was going to be distributed. There were no options for this. IU would have wanted to significantly expand I-Light to K12, hospitals, etc. Other states did that. Who will be on the FCC and be able to make these decisions? The door will be much more open for public investment than it is now. Joanne from CTC - there will be lessons learned from Obama-era stimulus that will be applied to next go around.
- (g) [Tim] Shared this map:
<https://muninetworks.org/communitymap>
- (h) [Mike Trotzke] Just keep going back to what we were trying to accomplish. An appetite for the subsidy/cost. Number gets better and better - especially as pandemic continues. [Rick] Close to signing contracts in both cases. Within 2 and 2.5 years to fully deploy throughout the entirety of the corporate boundary of Bloomington. They were public-private partnerships. Most of the financial investment was being made by the private partner. Some

assistance in assets and promotions on digital equity by the City. Capital costs - \$30M-\$60M depending on network. [Mike Trotzke] Cost to the City? [Rick] \$10M, but probably closer to \$5M. Designed for subsidy programs to get people on that couldn't otherwise afford it. [Mike Trotzke] What is the tipping point threshold? [Rick] Joanne from CTC - very little of that activity happening right now. I would put all of our cards on the table to try public-private partnership again than locally building here considering political concerns. [Chris] Where does \$30-\$60M fit relative to other things we invest in like schools? [Rick] Switchyard Park project total under \$30M. Can be done, but typically need to figure out. Don't have referendum territory. No bond authority remaining. Bonded out for parking garages, Trades District, etc. [Mike] If you are doing that against revenues, it is easier. [Rick] We have done revenue bonds at the City. City took over athletic facility - Twin Lakes - could point to the revenue - here is anticipated revenue. I'm not aware of any City being successful using a revenue bond? Not sure. Starting up an ISP - have to acquire customers. Would be an option, but would have to find someone to underwrite that bond and take the loss if that revenue doesn't pan out. [Tim] All the things that can go wrong in operating an ISP - an ISP needs to go out of business and then the City take over - perfect storm opportunity. I've answered this question a number of times over the last week - they don't have internet at their house - what are you going to do about it? Providers don't come to their house, no cell service at their house, can we build a cell tower, referenced the number of times the City has tried to tackle this problem within City limits. [Chris] Running a network sucks, you don't want to do it. [Rick] Took me the entire time I've been working at the City to get approval to just hire a Network Administrator. [Chris] Ongoing costs of that are daunting. [Rick] Really need a partner to do this. We have a lot to pay down in debt service because of a number of major initiatives.

(5) [Rick] If you have ideas on additional questions/initiatives send them to me.

2) MEMBER REPORTS

- a) [Rick] What is everyone else doing?
- b) [Chris] Rob Lowden - new IU Vice President for IT and Chief Information Officer. In the past, shared updates from this meeting with Dave and Brad. Students are coming back. Same issues. On campus or in apartments that have good connectivity. There are the parking lot access points and fairly certain that is continuing. I'm mostly interested in equity issues Tim is dealing with. [Rick] Pass up the chain - working with the Mayor right now on scheduling community stakeholder/interview phase with CTC - hoping to pin down dates this coming week. IU, MCCSC, public, etc. will all be able to weigh in.
- c) [Mike] The Mill continuing to figure out how to operate. Not doing events. All the standard provisions, must wear a mask, etc.

3) ADJOURN

a) *Next meeting:*

i) Thursday September 3, 4-5:30pm