

# Broadband

## August 2023

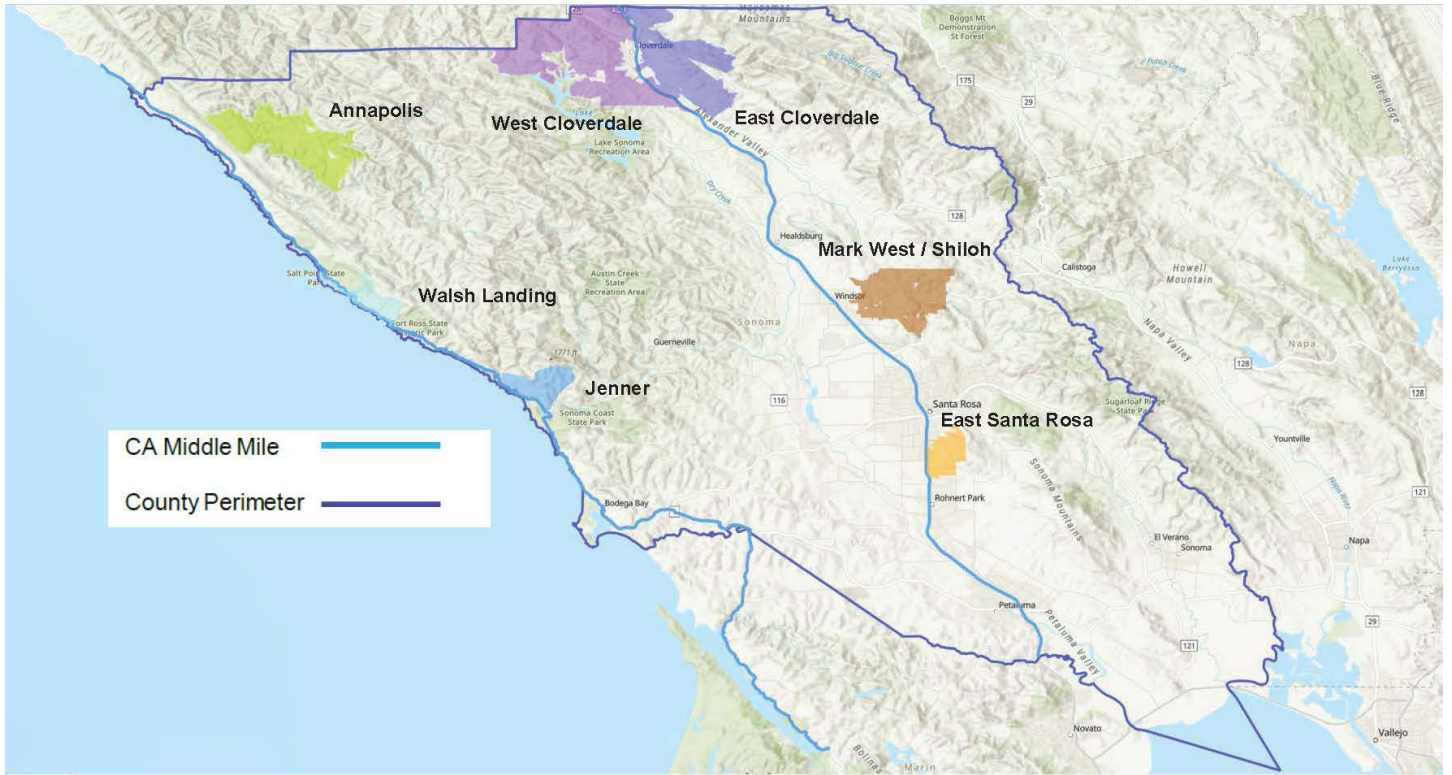
### Team Members

- Brad Johnson, Department Analyst
- Kate Fosburgh, Digital Access Project Coordinator
- Lauren Cartwright, Interim Deputy Director

### Infrastructure & Deployment

On August 1<sup>st</sup> staff provided recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for further direction on low-level projects, governance structure and ideas around additional funding opportunities to expand low-level design. Below is a re-cap of the approved recommended actions...

- Approved recommendations
  1. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Golden State Connect Authority
    - Golden State Connect Authority is a Joint Powers Authority governed by 40 rural California counties whose main objective is to facilitate the deployment of broadband infrastructure. The MOU between Golden State Connect Authority and the County of Sonoma will allow for Golden State Connect Authority to finance, build, own, and operate open access broadband infrastructure in Sonoma County right of ways; connecting those who are currently unserved.
  2. Uncodified Ordinance
    - The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors approved an ordinance that authorizes the Director of Public Infrastructure to grant licenses and permits to the state, or to any county, city, district, or public agency or corporation, or to any public utility corporation, for use of any County real property for purposes of any broadband infrastructure network or project. This ordinance gives Golden State Connect Authority the official recognition it needs to be able to be permitted use of County right of ways to deploy broadband infrastructure.
  3. Selected Priority Areas
    - The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors analyzed a list of 23 proposed priority areas and identified 7 areas (213 miles total) to prioritize for low level (shovel ready) engineering designs for. The areas selected by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors are:
      1. Jenner – 4.87 miles
      2. East Santa Rosa – 24.96 miles
      3. Walsh Landing – 12.18 miles
      4. East Cloverdale / Preston – 44.42 miles
      5. West Cloverdale – 41.75 miles
      6. Mark West / Shiloh – 49.24 miles
      7. Annapolis – 36.18 miles



With existing grant funding, we had a preexisting engineering design budget for approximately 45 miles of shovel ready engineering design.

4. American Rescue Plan Act funding allocation

- To cover the remaining 160 miles of low-level design for the selected priority areas, the Sonoma County Board of supervisors allocated \$1.5 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to expand the available budget for engineering design.

5. Delegate Authority for Grant Agreements

- As State and federal funding opportunities continue to arise at more frequent rates, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors recognized the need for the county to have a more flexible and accommodating process to accept funds. Therefore, the board of supervisors delegated authority to the executive director and deputy director of the Economic Development Board, the assistant County administrative officer, and the County Administrative Officer to apply for, accept, and negotiate broadband grant funds on behalf of the County of Sonoma.

6. Delegate Authority for Low-Level Design Expansion

- The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors delegated authority to the Economic Development Board’s executive director to expand an existing agreement with Golden State connect authority for low level design. This expansion will fold in the additional ~160 miles of shovel ready engineering design.

**Next Steps**

Following these actions by the Board of Supervisors, the Economic Development Board is prepared to engage in an agreement with Golden State Connect Authority to design, deploy, operate, and maintain broadband infrastructure in Sonoma County. One of the first of many steps towards financing this infrastructure will be an infrastructure grant application submission by Golden State Connect Authority to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for the Federal Funding Account award opportunity.

The Board also provided interest and guidance to staff to further investigate public private partnerships for areas that are not feasible to Golden State Connect Authority’s open access model. Staff is reaching out to incumbent internet service providers to preliminarily inquire about their interest and insights around public private partnerships.

In addition to the actions above, staff is keeping local partners up to date about the progress, opportunities, and obstacles surrounding broadband deployment in Sonoma County. Local partners include Cities, private providers, non-profits, tribes, and residents.

### **Advanced Adoption**

- Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)
  1. Approximately 38% (71,600) of all households (189,374) in Sonoma County are eligible for the ACP program. Currently 15% (10,974) of eligible households are enrolled in ACP.
  2. In partnership with Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County, we created an ACP landing page with information on eligibility, how to enroll, and where to find enrollment assistance near you. This includes a calendar of events with ACP Tabling. <https://www.capsonoma.org/acp/>
  3. Conducting outreach through Sonoma County Office of Education and Library Newsletters
  4. Radio and digital marketing campaigns will kick off mid-August to early September
    - Wine Country Radio
      - Radio advertisements on Krush 95.9, Exitos 98.7 and Latino 100.9
      - Livestream Pre-roll advertisements on Exitos 98.7 and Latino 100.9
    - Amaturio Sonoma Media
      - Digital advertisements focusing on geofencing and search engine marketing
  5. Upcoming Events
    - Summer in South Park, August 19<sup>th</sup>
    - Sonoma Ready Russian River, September 13<sup>th</sup>
- CA Emerging Technology Fund Regional Broadband Consortia Leadership Grant
  1. Preparing materials for a “map of needs and opportunities” for outreach to cities in all four counties.
  2. Exploring strategies to promote ACP across all four counties utilizing database of anchor institutions.