

Connect Mariposa Advisory Board (CMAB)

Minutes

March 7, 2022, 4-5pm

[Via Teams Meeting](#) (audio only)

- I. The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm.
- II. Attendance: All five appointed members of the advisory board, Dallin Kimble, Mariposa County, Joe Meyer/David Thorpe, YNP, Rick Patterson, MCUSD, Craig Burchfiel, JCF, Andrew Milman, Member at Large, were present, so there was a quorum. In addition, Rosemarie Smallcombe and Tom Sweeney, Board of Supervisors Liaisons were present, as well as Tara Schiff, County Staff. Kristin Montgomery attended as a guest.
- III. Membership – The advisory board discussed the one year term and elected a chair to lead the next meeting. Dallin Kimble volunteered to be the chair of the next CMAB meeting. The advisory board agreed to have members rotate to chair the meetings.
- IV. Mission Statement – The advisory board agreed that it is too premature to create a Mission Statement at this time and will wait until the board meets again to discuss the CMAB Mission. Staff will send the Board a draft Mission Statement as an example. Supervisor Rosemarie Smallcombe mentioned, “County is one player among many entities. We can share information and work together to pursue funding.” Need a problem statement. Andrew Milman commented, “How do we bring better internet to Mariposa County? We need to review the information we have before we need to decide what our Mission Statement will be.”
- V. Attendees reviewed and discussed the following objectives:
 - a. Assist staff and consultants through the process to develop broadband plans for Mariposa County.
 - b. Formulate, design, implement and participate in a public engagement program involving stakeholders in the community, for the establishment of a broadband plan and a regional roadmap.
 - c. Support the work of staff and/or consultants in the conduct of fact finding and data gathering necessary to:
 1. Identify existing broadband opportunities in Mariposa County, and
 2. Determine how to construct the data into a strategic plan, and
 3. Recommend projects, programs, and policies needed to efficiently implement the Economic Vitality Strategy’s broadband goals.
 - d. Support the work of staff and/or consultants in the development, approval and implementation of a broadband plan that shall facilitate the implementation of the 2017 EVS broadband goals, by accessing Mariposa County’s broadband needs and the best interests of its community.
 - e. Provide periodic assessment, evaluation of, and feedback to the Board of Supervisors regarding the status of the broadband plan and roadmap.
- VI. Staff provided an update on the following broadband projects:
 - a. Regional Broadband Roadmap – This project consists of a 5 county, Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Mariposa and Tuolumne, region which represent the Central Sierra Economic Development District (CSEDD). A consultant, Neo Connect, was hired to lead the project, along with California Forward, which was hired as a subcontractor to assist with community outreach to youth and seniors in the 5 communities. Tasks that have been completed or are underway at this point are:

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- i. Survey - A survey was distributed to the region via the internet and social media. Access to the survey is available [here](#).
 - ii. Webinars – The consultant facilitated four webinars on February 8th, 9th, 16th and 17th. Staff will ask the consultant for a recording of the webinar.
 - iii. Draft Roadmap – The consultant is finalizing the first draft of the Roadmap. Staff will confirm when the document will be distributed to members of the Board of Supervisors at each county.
- b. Staff gave a report regarding the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) Broadband Grant/Golden State Connect Authority project. RCRC is still awaiting notification of the Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant award. The following information was reported to the advisory board:

GOLDEN STATE CONNECT AUTHORITY UPDATE

Advocacy

The RCRC Advocacy Team continues to provide comments during CPUC Proceedings related to SB 156 program components. Similarly, they continue to monitor and comment on specific broadband-related legislative and regulatory matters as they arise, to represent opinions related to the best interests of our member counties.

At present, the RCRC Advocacy Team is a party to, and has provided formal comment on, CPUC Proceedings related to:

- California Middle Mile Projects
- California Last Mile/Federal Funding
- Local Area Technical Assistance (LATA) Fund
- *Loan Loss Reserve Fund (Proceeding anticipated to open soon)*

Broadband Strategic Plans

We await word from US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) on the status of our grant application for the development of broadband strategic plans for 27 of our member counties and the development of Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDs) for three of our member counties. The application was submitted in September 2021 and is working its way through the EDA internal review process.

Open-Access, Public Benefit Municipal Broadband Infrastructure

Golden State Connect Authority is in the midst of our analysis and ranking as we move toward decisions on where the initial project areas across our 38 member counties may be for deployment of an open-access, public benefit municipal broadband network.

Analysis includes the following components (among others):

- Finance
- Geology and geography
- Density of unserved and underserved addresses
- Access to existing (or planned) open-access middle mile infrastructure
- Local governments interested and willing to partner with GSCA

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- Other partnership opportunities

Golden State Connect Authority Membership

It is anticipated that with the addition of Santa Barbara County at the March Golden State Connect Authority Board of Directors Meeting, GSCA will include all 38 RCRC member counties.

- VII. The Advisory Board discussed available Broadband Funding/Legislation and reviewed the attached Regional Broadband Roadmap draft PowerPoint presentation.
- Comments:
- What methodology was used to determine who was unserved and served?
I think the numbers were talking in generalities of service counties. They identified the number of households.
There was research regarding the actual speeds. California Forward reached out to the youth and senior population.
Will ask the consultant to show who has broadband and who doesn't in Mariposa.
We need to determine what is feasible in a mountainous area. It's a lot of cabling getting into the back areas.
Is there intent to overlay the map that's been provided with the service area of the different providers?
There's a map with the last mile and middle mile that identifies providers.
This plan is still not reaching the back roads that don't have service. You'll need cable, wireless broadband or microwave.
What is the best technology for our county?
Who is serving the areas now and what technology are they using?
Microwave is not the perfect solution. Fiber is very expensive to install in mountainous areas. There will be a hybrid solution.
Breakout of \$20 million. What does that bring? \$20 million will not go very far in a mountainous region. We need a breakout of the design and where the data was pulled.
What is the level of competency in the data?
What is \$20 million going to get you?
What is the effect of StarLink?
StarLink is just households; however, YNP will be using it as Beta test.
Small businesses, mostly home-based are using StarLink and are very happy with the upload/download speed.
Are we looking at internet for the general public or just businesses? Since the roadmap was funded by the Department of Commerce/EDA, it does need to have a business focus, but we are looking at how to best service residents, as well.
Don't forget the Governor's goal of 98% coverage of households and using available funding to meet that goal.
There is a lot of economic activity in YNP that need improved connectivity and the ability to serve the guests, public safety function or base operations. Tie the activities in the Park to the economic aspect of part of the grant.

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- American Rescue Plan – Emergency Connectivity Fund – On the Broadband Roadmap Draft as a possible funding source. Look at telehealth as a business reaching patients. Identify needs and projects, what funding source? Remember that congressionally directed spending is back. We can identify particular needs or projects to ask congress to fund. There is renewed interest in helping fund local projects, including broadband that will help the County, School District, hospital and Park.
- Multi-benefit approach is important and more likely to be funded. Improved internet speeds and broadband can benefit public Safety, help with wildlife risk reduction, assist with the delivery of healthcare services and government services, and benefit remote education. The advisory board should outline what's needed and how we can pursue that.
- VIII. Where do we start from here? It was decided that the advisory board would first review the Broadband Roadmap draft and then schedule a time to meet with the project consultant lead, Diane Kruse, CEO, NEOConnect. Feeling a sense of urgency.
- IX. The meeting was adjourned at 5:09 pm.