

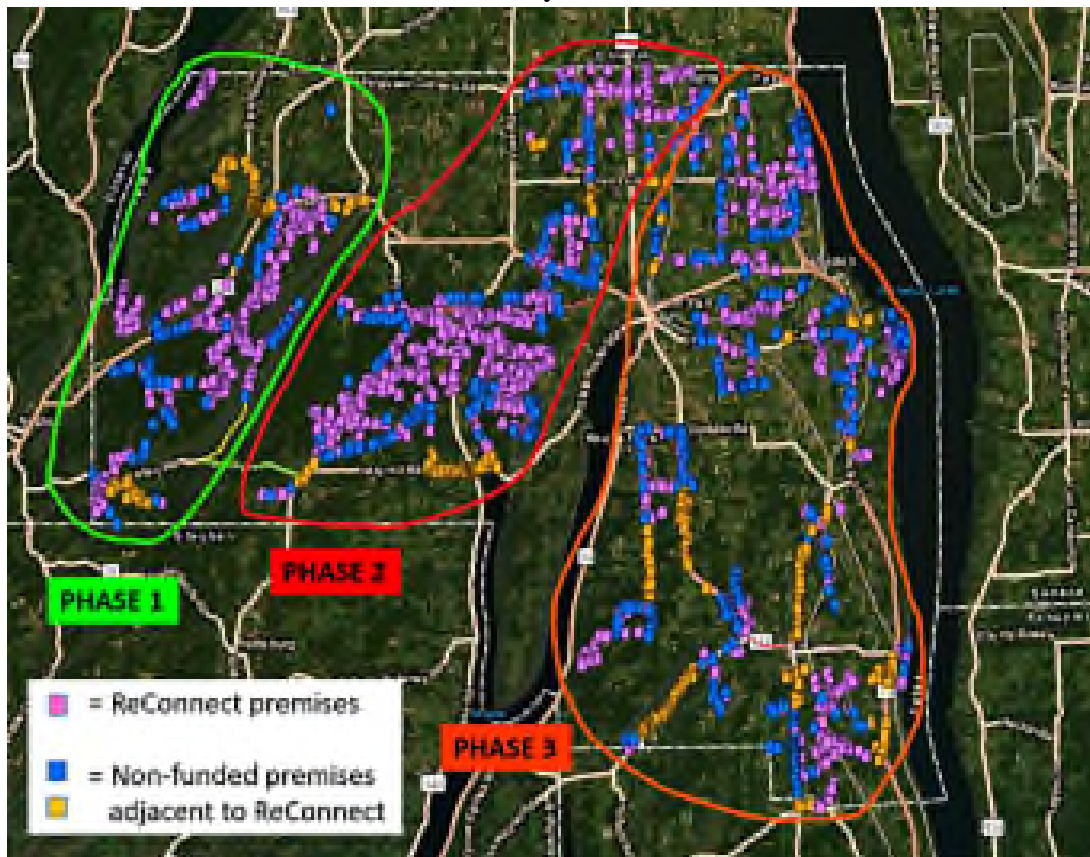
USDA ReConnect Project Update – Marian Walrath/Dan Long
Finance Committee 8/3/2021

1. **Services Agreement with Empire Access**

- a. Agreement still out for review and approval by USDA/RUS → backlog.

2. **Engineering**

- a. The executed RUS 217 contract is with RUS for review and approval.
- b. The plan is to complete the Plans and Specifications and the construction bid process in phases. Phase 1 also includes the backbone network which connects all areas. The surveying/fielding work is completed for the backbone and is proceeding for the distribution network in Middlesex/Italy.



3. **Construction**

- a. Goal is to start Phase I construction in 2021. Plan is to pre-order longer lead-times items like fiber and equipment.
- b. The other ‘bottleneck’ will be around pole permitting i.e. NYSEG, Verizon, Frontier which could lead to construction start delays. We have started making contacts at the legislative level (O’Mara and Palmesano) and with the utilities requesting assistance to smooth and expedite those processes.

4. **Grant Applications**

- a. Intended use for first two would be to expand the ReConnect network to reach the NFSA premises that are adjacent to this network (non-funded service areas = areas which are not eligible to build to using our ReConnect grant monies).
- b. Northern Border Regional Commission grant (NBRC) -- Applied on 5/14/21 for \$1M grant with \$250K match. Notification Fall 2021.
- c. Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) request – Submitted \$4.9M request thru Senator Schumer’s and Senator Gillibrand’s portals on 5/26/21. Notification Fall 2021.
- d. NYS Consolidated Funding Application – Did not apply for this funding as it only provided a 20% grant / 80% match.
- e. National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Broadband Infrastructure Program Grant -- currently exploring a possible application submission by August 17, 2021 deadline.
- f. USDA ReConnect Round 3 – FOA (Funding Opportunity Announcement) expected July/August 2021 with Application portal open Fall 2021.

5. **Broadband Committee** – A workshop is scheduled for September 27 to develop a Strategic Plan to bring to the Legislators.