

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Administration Building
UNH Coop Extension Conference Room
3855 Dartmouth College Highway
North Haverhill, NH
May 2nd 2022

PRESENT: Representatives Sykes, Gordon, Abel, Greeson, Murphy, Folsom, Simon, Weston, Egan – via Zoom, Commissioner Lauer, Commissioner Ahern, Commissioner Piper – via Zoom, County Administrator Libby, Administrative Asst. Norcross, Sheriff Stiegler, County Attorney Hornick, Treasurer Hill.

Rep. Sykes called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM and began with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Rep. Sykes.

Elected Officials Salaries Discussion

Rep. Sykes stated that they would begin their discussion with Elected Officials Salaries to see if the Executive Committee wants to bring forward a recommendation at the end of the month to the full Delegation.

Rep. Abel stated that one of the things that has always disturbed him is they have such a disparity between full time employees regular employees and elected officials, particularly full time, who are doing the same amount of work but paid lower. He would like to consider raising the salaries of the Elected Officials so they are closer to what other employees are making. He does not see why an elected official should make significantly less than a regular employee who may have fewer responsibilities. Rep. Simon asked what the difference is between full time and part time elected officials. Rep. Sykes explained that the Commissioners may only spend one (1) day a week at the office but they are often out doing County business and this is something they want to be mindful of. The amount of time each of the Commissioners spend on County business is not easily quantifiable, nor the same for each of the Commissioners. The Sheriff, County Attorney and Register of Deeds are full time employees with benefits. He asked CA Libby how often the Treasurer is in the office. CA Libby explained that since COVID, the Treasurer has not been in the office as much but they talk regularly.

Commissioner Piper stated that they have been asked in the past for comments and if they recommend a raise for themselves and it is uncomfortable. She endorses what Rep. Sykes said. She stated that she would not speak to the full time Elected Officials but this has been a very challenging term. These positions are not based on the person, it is the position and they do not get merit increases. Rep. Sykes said they are not required to be on site beyond the scheduled meetings but because it is an executive position, they have many issues they deal with. They take decisions home with them; they occupy time outside of the office.

Rep. Gordon stated that he is not as concerned the amount of time that goes into the job because it is not about the hours you put in, rather what you put into the hours. He stated that they have

people managing a \$40 million budget and paying them \$11,000 to do so. Commissioner Ahern stated that he is here because it is public service. It is about being of service to the community and he has a vested interest in watching the budget as he is a tax payer as well. He does not see a need to raise the Commissioners salaries.

Rep. Sykes stated that he feels they can discuss each position individually. Rep. Weston noted that COLAs should be considered due to the increase in inflation. They do not want this to be a job only retired people can take. There are overriding questions that they want to address that would apply to all positions. Rep. Sykes noted that he has felt in the past, during these discussions, that it is important to be mindful of what the other counties are paying. There may be different level of responsibilities for these Elected Officials depending on the size of the county.

Rep. Egan stated that COVID has created more work for employees as well as inflation and he feels they need to factor that into the discussion. Rep. Sykes noted that Elected Officials did not receive an increase this last term. Rep. Simon stated that he runs his own business and it is not possible to pay his employees what they were paid two (2) years ago. They have to look at this realistically. People in the public sector have seen raises the last two (2) years. Rep. Folsom noted that she is most concerned with raising the Commissioners positions. One of the differences between the Commissioners and the Treasurer is that the Commissioners have to be out in the public and events where the Treasurer can do the bulk of her work remotely.

Commissioner Lauer stated that she is not running again and therefore she is neutral in the conversation about Commissioners' salaries. She is concerned with their three (3) full time positions. They rely on their salaries for a living, in order to keep top candidates in these positions they need to pay competitive salaries. These positions are in high demand.

Rep. Gordon stated that he is concerned about the full time positions rather than the part time. He has concerns compared to other counties. Given what the pay is in other counties, he wonders why Grafton County's positions are paid significantly less with essentially the same responsibilities. He is concerned about making sure the full time Elected Officials are compensated well for the jobs they are doing. Rep. Greeson stated that, except for Treasurer who is above average, the salaries across the board are below average. He does not feel they need to compete with Rockingham County but Grafton County does come in just below average across the board.

Rep. Sykes suggested that the Committee start with the Chair of the Commissioners

MOTION: Rep. Weston moved to recommend increasing the Commissioners' salaries by 10%.

Rep. Weston stated that if they work 100 hours per year they are making \$11.00/hour an hour and this increase would put them to \$12.00/hour. Rep. Simon noted that if they were to take a 10% increase across the board for all Elected Officials positions, it is roughly a \$24,000 total increase.

8:30 AM Rep Sykes recessed the meeting for Party Caucuses. Party members left the room to caucus with their respective parties

8:45 AM Party members returned and the meeting was reconvened

Rep. Greeson seconded the motion to recommend raising the salaries of the Commissioners by 10%. Rep. Weston called the roll. Rep. Abel “yes”, Rep. Egan “yes”, Rep. Folsom “yes”, Rep. Gordon “yes”, Rep. Greeson “yes”, Rep. Murphy “yes”, Rep. Simon “yes”, Rep. “Sykes”, Rep. Weston “yes”. With the vote being nine (9) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

MOTION: Rep. Folsom moved to recommend increasing the Treasurer’s salary by 10%. Rep. Weston seconded the motion. Rep. Weston called the roll. Rep. Abel “yes”, Rep. Egan “yes”, Rep. Folsom “yes”, Rep. Gordon “yes”, Rep. Greeson “yes”, Rep. Murphy “yes”, Rep. Simon “yes”, Rep. “Sykes”, Rep. Weston “yes”. With the vote being nine (9) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

MOTION: Rep. Simon moved to recommend increasing the salaries for the Sheriff, Register of Deeds and County Attorney by 10%. Rep. Greeson seconded the motion.

Discussion: Rep. Weston stated that she would be voting against the motion as she thinks it needs to go higher to retain the good people they have. In other counties, these positions are paying more. Rep. Greeson noted that it is important to point out that Grafton County is not a growing county. By raising the salaries 10%, it puts Grafton County at competitive salaries. He feels this increase is fair. Rep. Weston stated that all of these figures are all from the prior term and she is sure all of these counties are raising their figures as well. Rep. Greeson stated that these are the numbers as they currently are. Grafton County will still be competitive and they can revisit to see if they need to give another 10% in two (2) years. CA Libby explained that historically in the past, there have been some years where the Delegation has voted on a raise for the 1st year of the term, and the 2nd year of the term there is another raise. Rep. Murphy stated that his biggest concern speaks to Rep. Greeson’s concern. Many jobs have returned to New Hampshire but people are not taking those jobs. His concern is if we are seeing a decline in the population how are we going to recruit to these positions. Rep. Sykes asked if there are employees making more than their elected official department heads. CA Libby stated that there are some cases where the employee is making more than their elected official department head. Rep. Gordon asked what the employees would be receiving.

Commissioner Piper stated that all three (3) Commissioners are working very hard and creatively this budget season. They have astronomical increases in the budget in terms of inflation and fuel cost. They will be finishing the budget on Thursday. They just accepted a new wage chart because of the wage study that was conducted and they are very proud of it. They presented it to the employees last Thursday. The raise that was voted on brought all salaries to market value and it was an average of a 4.5% increase for all employees. The cost to the county to implement this wage chart is \$750,000. The

Commissioners are being very creative to ensure they are not burdening the taxpayers. Rep. Gordon stated that he would support the 10% increase.

Rep. Weston called the roll. Rep. Weston called the roll. Rep. Abel “no”, Rep. Egan “yes”, Rep. Folsom “yes”, Rep. Gordon “yes”, Rep. Greeson “yes”, Rep. Murphy “no”, Rep. Simon “yes”, Rep. “no”, Rep. Weston “no”. With the vote being five (5) in favor and four (4) in opposition the motion passes.

Broadband Committee – Carina Park, Ed Morris – via Zoom

CA Libby started the conversation by explaining that there was talk of having the Broadband Committee, Commissioners and Executive Committee meet to get an update on the Broadband Project. She stated that the Broadband Committee met with the Commissioners last week and had a very informative meeting. The Broadband Committee is here to make the same presentation to the Executive Committee.

C. Park explained that the Broadband Committee is proposing a 335-mile combination of a backbone/middle mile network. It is 144 strands, which gives them the ability to break off individual strands for individual needs or causes. There would be 144 strands throughout the County with a head end location at each individual town hall or Emergency Operations Center, whichever is most convenient for that community. She stated that many small communities do not have town halls and they can do an environmental office in the town. It would be a combined network for both the middle mile and it would be designed to bring fiber cable to the homes and businesses, which is what makes their middle mile different from the middle mile that is currently throughout Grafton County. The current middle mile was designed for point end to point end, not branching off that each individual community needs.

C. Park reviewed the attached PowerPoint presentation with the Committee and answered questions.

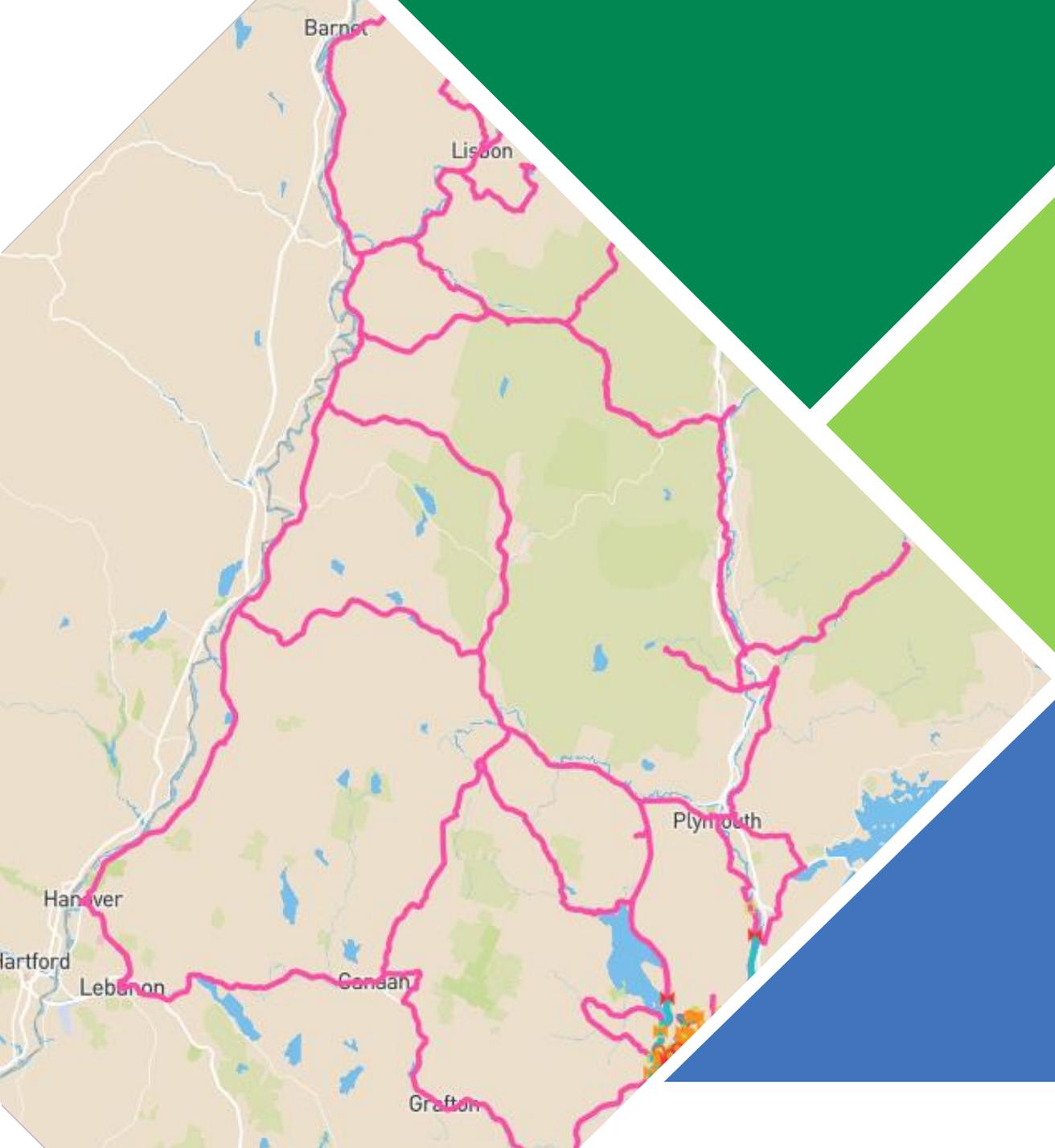
CA Libby stated that the next meeting date is May 23rd. There is a full Delegation meeting as well to set Elected Officials Salaries.

10:42 AM With no further business, the meeting adjourned

Sincerely,



Joyce Weston, Clerk

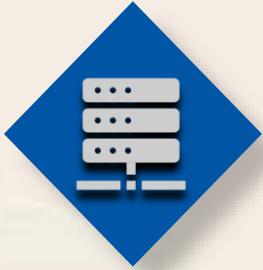


Grafton County Broadband Now

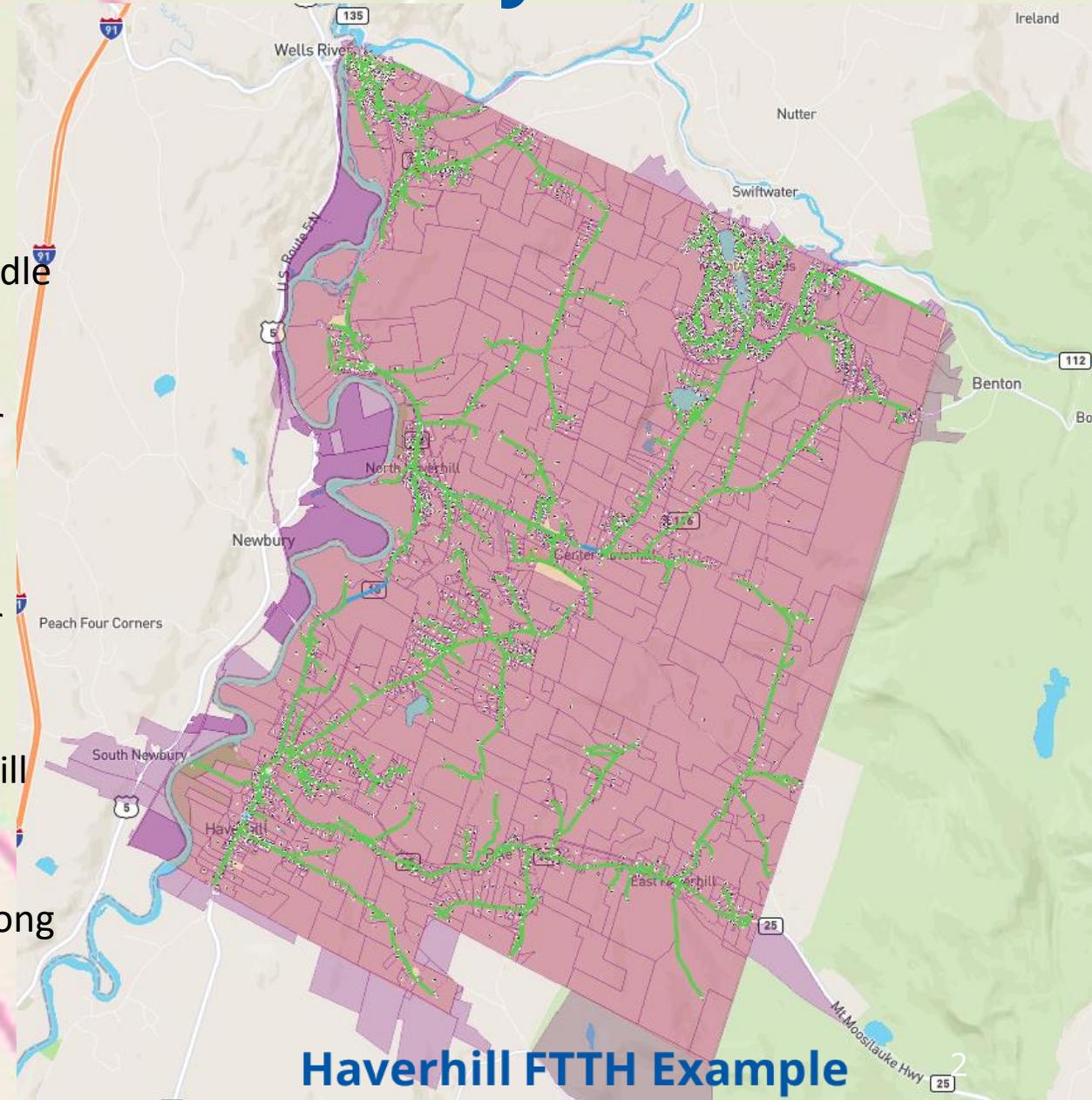
April 26 2022

Is the County “Middle Mile” Necessary?

YES! And here’s why:



- ✓ Network’s design is different than true middle mile(MM) networks like FirstLight (UNH network)
- ✓ Existing MM networks are not designed for Fiber to the Home (FTTH) use
- ✓ “Network is a combination of an interstate with more local exits”
- ✓ Combined design for Core Network and for Last Mile design/needs
- ✓ More affordable vs. leasing FirstLight fiber
- ✓ Without middle-mile some communities will be forced to build it themselves
- ✓ Ensures full county coverage
- ✓ Potential revenue stream for the County. Long term IRU agreements or annual leases

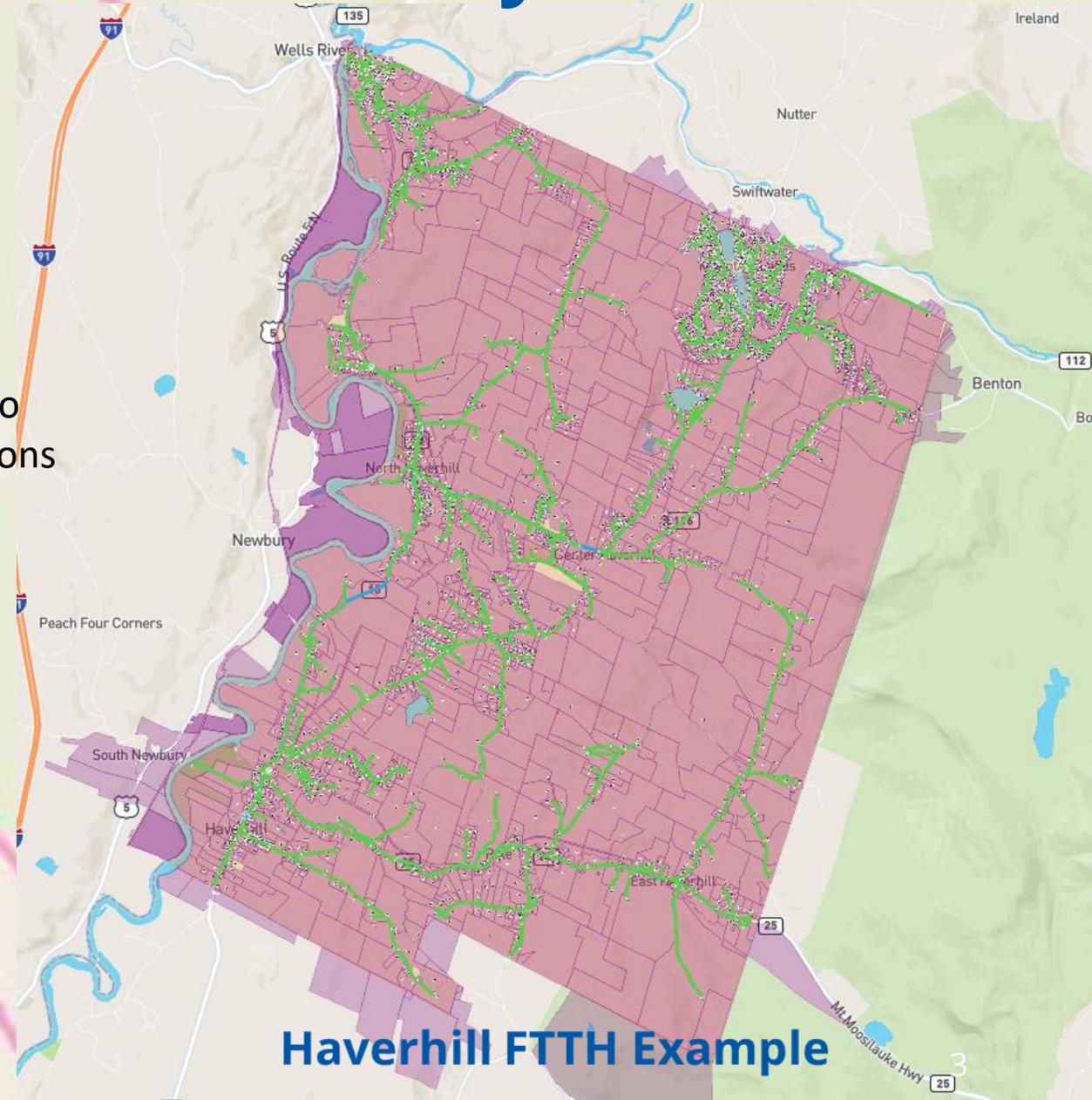


Is the County "Middle Mile" Necessary?



Design Components:

- ✓ 335 miles
- ✓ 144 Backbone fiber
- ✓ Provides a truly unified connection. Town to town with 39 proposed head-end connections
- ✓ Creates redundant loop architecture
- ✓ USNH connections at PSU
- ✓ USNH network services available
- ✓ Dark fiber availability
- ✓ Carrier/Customer connections
- ✓ Customer connections



Haverhill FTTH Example

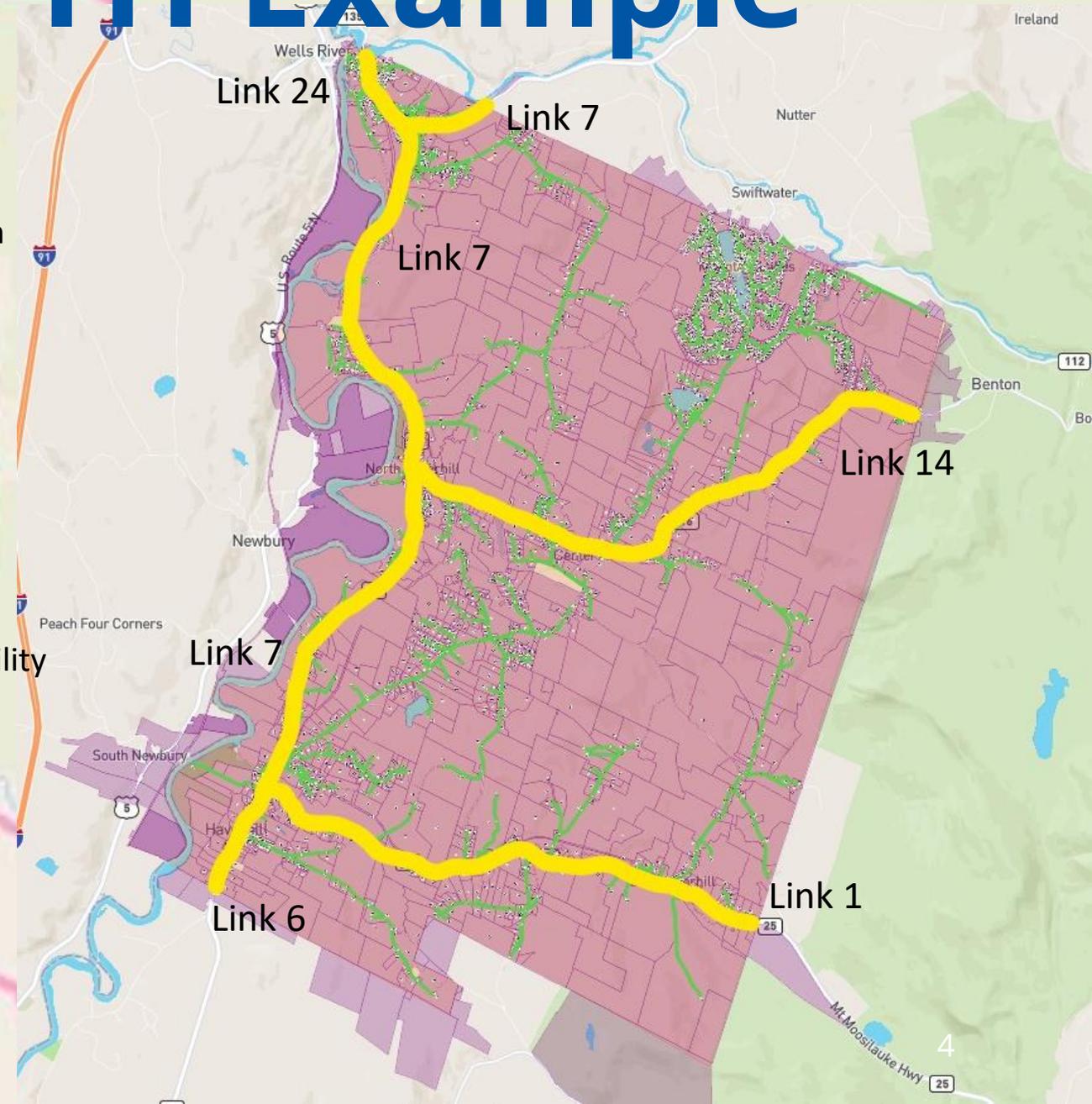


Haverhill High Level Design (HLD)

- ✓ 144 Backbone fiber with 96/72/24 Distribution
- ✓ Dark fiber availability
- ✓ Initial FTTH network design
- ✓ USNH network services available
- ✓ Carrier/Customer connections
- ✓ FTTH (Last Mile) connections/use
- ✓ Link 1, Link 6, Link 7, Link 14, and Link 24 of County MM Network part of FTTH design
 - ✓ Similar MM (Backbone) use in Bristol Network
 - ✓ Core Network and Last mile fiber availability

Haverhill Detailed Level Design (Final)

- ✓ Final design of FTTH
- ✓ Incorporates MM Design
- ✓ Project estimate revisions
- ✓ "Shovel Ready" for ISP partnership and/or grant submissions



IRU

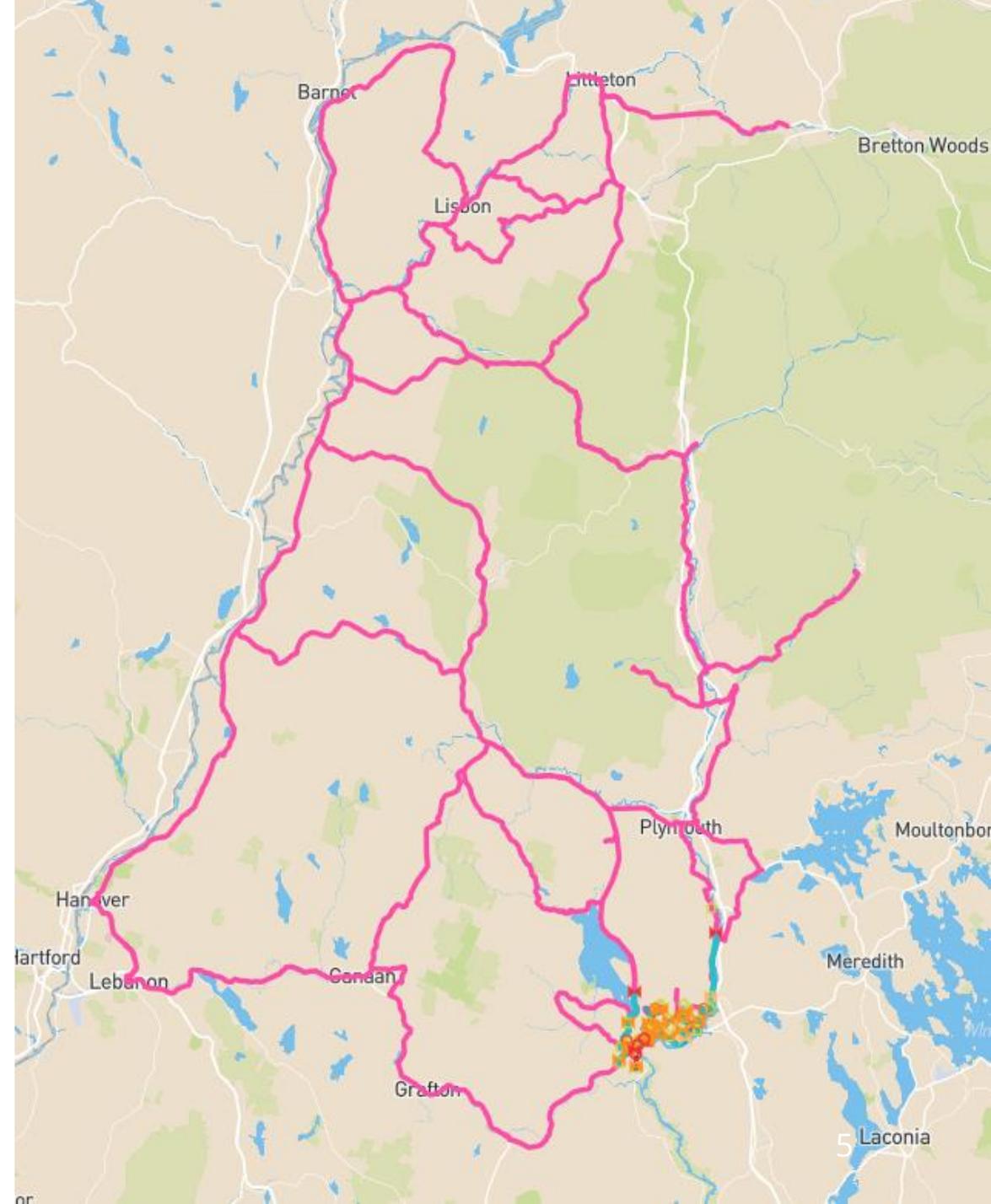


Indefeasible Right of Usage (IRU)

- ✓ Long term lease
- ✓ Term length 20-30 years
- ✓ Lease and O&M fees
- ✓ IRU can have restrictive terms depending on Owner of Fiber
 - ✓ i.e. Bristol's NHEC IRU
- ✓ High count leased becomes financially prohibitive

Potential County IRU terms

- ✓ Long term lease
- ✓ Term length 20-30 years
- ✓ Lease and O&M fees
- ✓ O&M cost focused
- ✓ Competitive pricing in marketplace
- ✓ Structure IRUs to support last mile usage



Bristol Broadband Now



Bristol Broadband Now Network Partnership

- ✓ Partnership after RFP process
- ✓ Selected Hub66
- ✓ MOU and IRUs executed
- ✓ Five year ownership structure to meet NBRC grant guidelines and ISP investment
- ✓ Ability to fast-track investment

Estimates and Final Design



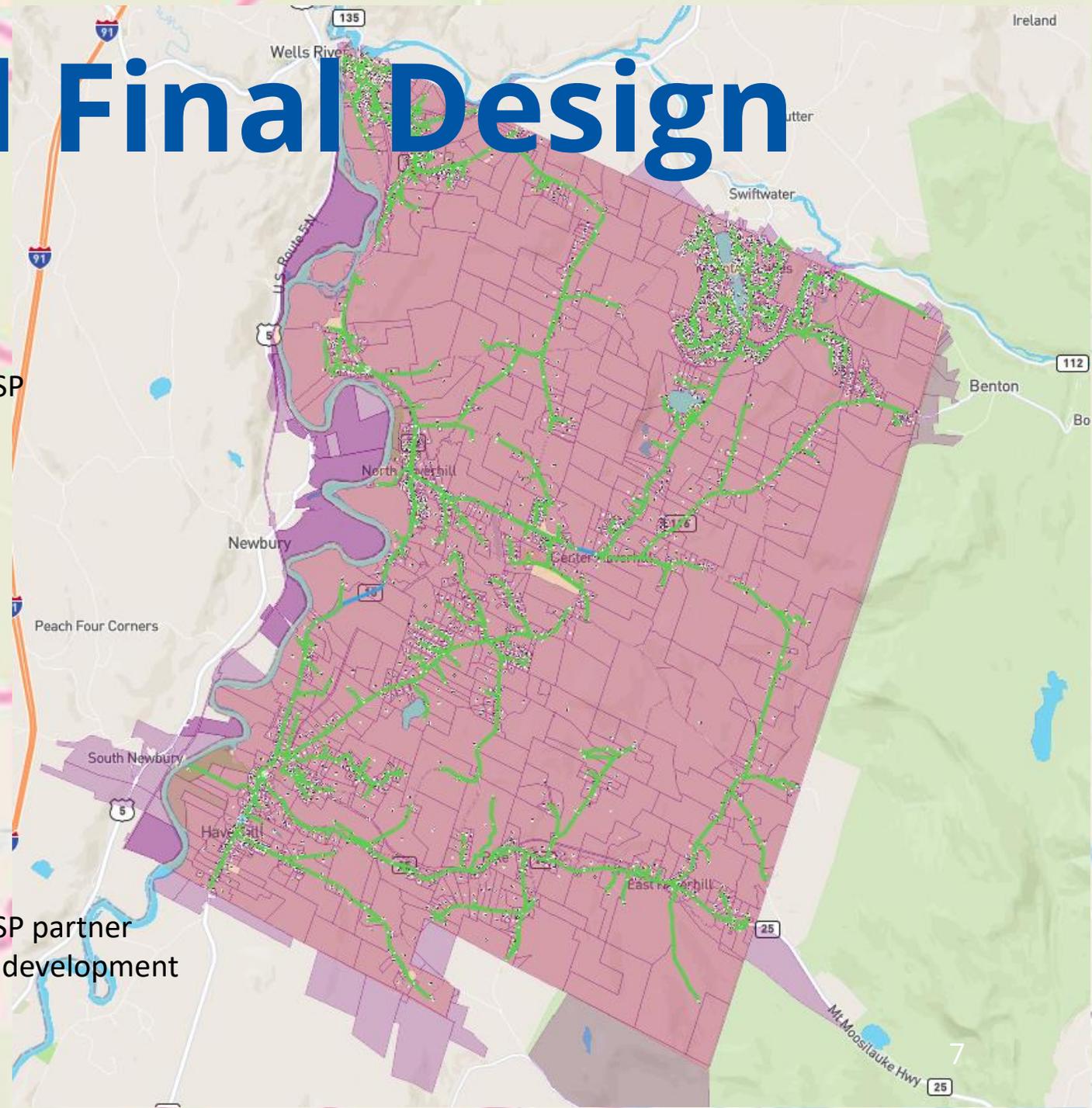
Last Mile Final Design

- ✓ Access to grant funding with/without ISP partner
- ✓ Final design provides estimate revision
- ✓ Supports RFP and cost review process
- ✓ “Shovel ready focus”
- ✓ Full town/fill in gaps



High Level Designs

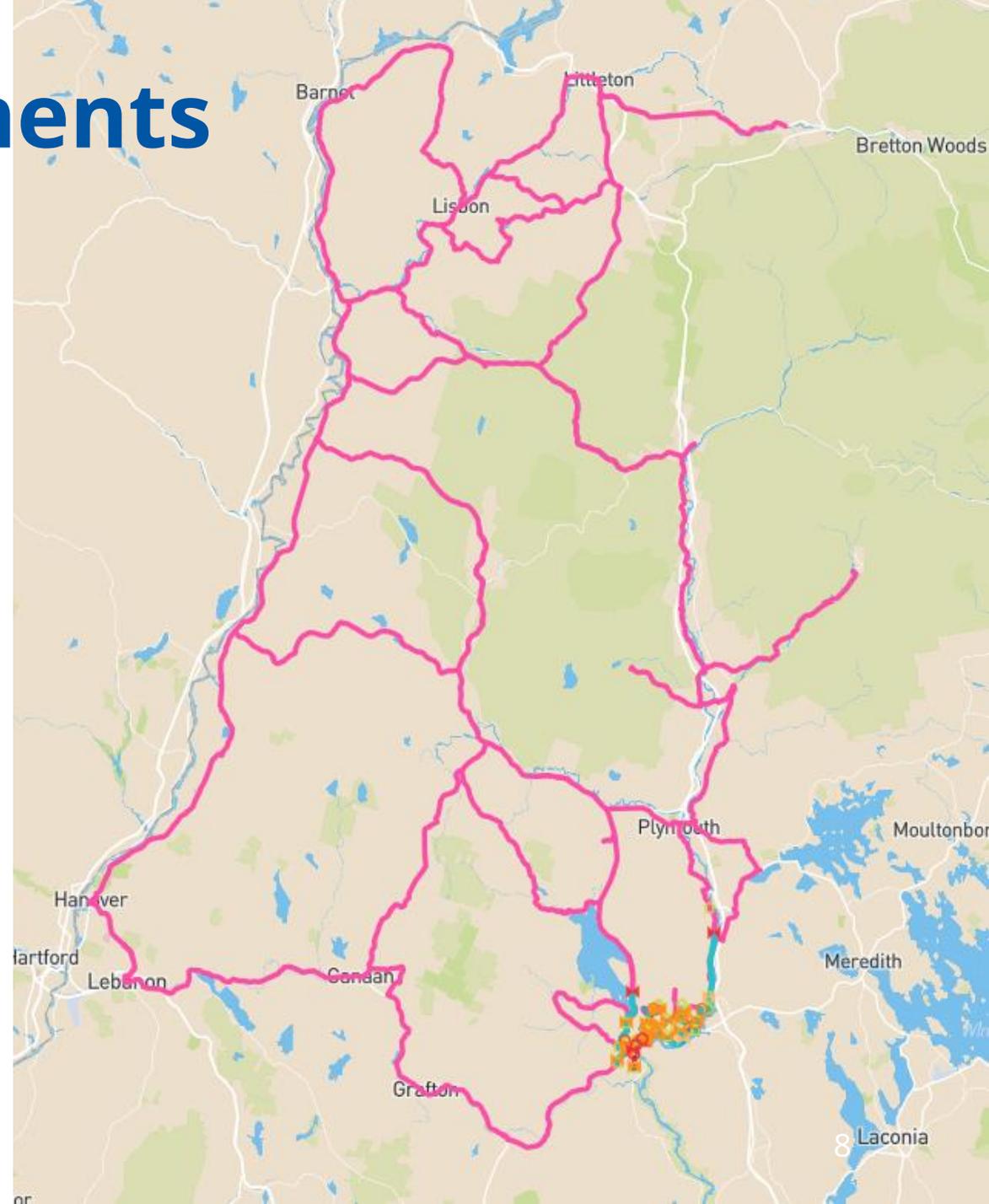
- ✓ Funded by County and CDBG
- ✓ 39 towns across the County
- ✓ Desktop Design
 - Integrate Middle Mile Design
- ✓ Access to grant funding with/without ISP partner
- ✓ Project Budget Development for Grant development



Committee Accomplishments



- ✓ Put a regional, statewide, and national spotlight on this issue in the north country.
- ✓ Created urgency with existing ISPs that they need to act
- ✓ Will create competition, which benefits residents of Grafton County
- ✓ Providing much-needed guidance, support, and resources to local communities
- ✓ Developing a path for other groups to follow. Example of success!
- ✓ Leveraged 100s of hours from the committee members (\$50,000-\$70,000 of free work), \$10,000 from NCIC Technical Assistance, and \$25,000 CDBG.



Conflicting Arguments

- ✓ **The county middle-mile duplicates existing broadband projects, so won't qualify for grants. There are no grants for MM funding.**
 - How will NHEC will qualify for grants, to expand their network, essentially duplicating existing projects if this is true?
 - The Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program, establishes and funds a \$1 billion program for the construction, improvement or acquisition of MM infrastructure. The purpose of the grant program is to expand and extend MM infrastructure to reduce the cost of connecting unserved and underserved communities.
- ✓ **The county middle-mile is not needed for 39 towns to gain access to the internet.**
 - There are a number of homes in Grafton County that currently have no access to the internet. Most of those homes will not be served by an NHEC project or any other ISP project.
 - NHEC **purchased** access to their remote locations.
 - If the MM is not needed, why is NHEC building one?
- ✓ **The county middle-mile does not focus on last-mile internet service.**
 - As in the case of Haverhill the middle mile is vital to our ability to pursue a last-mile project. Grafton county residents no longer want to be held hostage by a single ISP.
- ✓ **The “most productive focus of the County would be helping to provide fiber-to-the-premises”.**
 - That has been the goal since day one and exactly what the County **Commissioner are doing through the GCBC.**
- ✓ **The “Good Guys” state they are not for profit, elected by their constituents, and make “pittance”.**
 - They fail to tell you that the NHEC management team alone makes over \$2,537,275 annually: CEO makes almost \$500,000 per year, CFO makes over \$300,000 per year, VP of Operations makes over \$300,000 per year

