

Minnesota Broadband Plan Outline

January 31

2012

This document fulfills the second deliverable of the Governor's Task Force on Broadband created by Governor Mark Dayton under Executive Order #11-27 and requiring the filing of a Broadband Plan Outline by January 31, 2012.

Governor's
Task Force on
Broadband—
Broadband
Plan Outline

January 31, 2012

Dear Governor Dayton:

The Governor's Task Force on Broadband – representing a diverse balance of broadband interests, including consumers, businesses, residential users, educational and health care institutions, traditional telephone and cable companies, wireless providers, and local units of government – has been working collaboratively over the last several months. Our primary goal, at your direction, is to develop an action plan for identifying and correcting disparities in access and adoption of broadband in all Minnesota communities – urban, rural, and suburban.

On behalf of the Governor's Task Force on Broadband I am pleased to present the following *Minnesota Broadband Plan Outline* for your review. With this submission, we are meeting the deadline for the second deliverable as set forth in your [August 2011 Executive Order](#) establishing the Task Force. Our goal for this document is to provide a 'roadmap' that will:

- Move the state aggressively forward in efforts to meet the statutory broadband goals and your desire for ubiquitous broadband in Minnesota
- Establish a Task Force work plan and timeline for 2012 and beyond
- Ensure broadband stakeholders and policy makers are aware of how Minnesota is doing in its efforts to meet our broadband goals
- Introduce a set of recommendations that the Task Force believes will help to ensure Minnesota meets our broadband goals and becomes a national leader in developing the economic and social benefits of ubiquitous broadband

Included in this outline is an appendix that establishes a timeline for Task Force deliverables throughout the year. While each item is important, the most robust and significant deliverable will be the creation and submission of an Annual Report to be completed by December 10 of each year for the duration of the Task Force's work. That document will consistently provide the ability to benchmark Minnesota's efforts toward achieving our 2015 goals as established by statute.

I would like to thank all members of the Governor's Task Force on Broadband for their thoughtful, collaborative efforts, and their mutual dedication to meeting the mandate to produce this outline by January 31, 2012. We all look forward to your input and continued leadership on these issues. Working together, with common purpose, I am certain we can lay the groundwork necessary to connect all Minnesotans with border-to-border high-speed broadband technology.

Sincerely,

Margaret Anderson Kelliher, Chair
Governor's Task Force on Broadband

Introduction

Governor Mark Dayton issued Executive Order 11-27 in August 2011 creating the Governor's Task Force on Broadband and directing the Task Force to develop a *Minnesota Broadband Plan Outline* by January 31, 2012.

This Task Force reviewed the 2009 and 2010 reports of its predecessors, as well as the Task Force's December 2011 Report to the Governor, as a foundation for the outline; building on prior recommendations where appropriate and suggesting new actions that should be taken by the Task Force to promote Minnesota's broadband goals in 2012 and beyond. The importance of moving aggressively forward to ensure Minnesota achieves the statutory broadband goals by 2015 underpins each element of the following outline. The Task Force believes that developing and implementing strategies to meet and even surpass the goals is the key purpose of its efforts over the next three years.

The most recent data show that Minnesota is making progress toward achieving the state broadband goals. It is the belief of the Task Force that moving forward with greater coordination and information sharing across public, private and nonprofit sectors will allow the greatest opportunity for success.

Minnesota Broadband Goals (Minnesota Statute § 237.012):

Subdivision 1. Universal access and high-speed goal.

It is a state goal that as soon as possible, but no later than 2015, all state residents and businesses have access to high-speed broadband that provides minimum download speeds of ten to 20 megabits per second and minimum upload speeds of five to ten megabits per second.

Subdivision 2. State broadband leadership position.

It is a goal of the state that by 2015 and thereafter, the state be in:

- (1) the top five states of the United States for broadband speed universally accessible to residents and businesses;
- (2) the top five states for broadband access; and
- (3) the top 15 when compared to countries globally for broadband penetration.

Minnesota Broadband Plan Outline

This outline explains actions for the Task Force to develop a Broadband Plan during 2012 and guideposts for generation of an annual report that describes the current status (where we are now), long- and short-range goals (where we are going), and action plans (how we will get there) with regard to meeting our ubiquitous broadband goal for 2015. The report will be issued by December 10th of each year.

- The Task Force will generate an annual report on the state of broadband that includes comprehensive analysis and recommendations on each of the items listed below and as denoted in the appendix.
- The annual report will reflect the work of the Task Force during the year leading up to the reporting deadline, document progress, and reflect progress toward long- and short-range goal attainment and Task Force action plans as movement towards the state broadband goals occurs and lessons are learned.
- The annual report will include, as needed, suggestions for legislation that could assist the state with meeting the broadband goals.

In addition to the overarching responsibility to report annually on the activities of the Task Force and the state's progress towards the broadband goals, the following information outlines specific areas of focus the Task Force proposes to pursue in its work.

1. Create and maintain an up-to-date public-facing information dashboard describing progress towards reaching the state's ubiquitous broadband goals; maintain and promote an up-to-date list of broadband focused organizations and conferences; recognize and promote successful efforts; identify and monitor locations that are unserved, underserved or served by only one broadband provider. These resources will be available for all stakeholders and citizens in Minnesota.

- The Task Force will identify existing resources that collect and present research and data on the state of broadband in Minnesota for use in identifying strategies to meet the broadband goals.
- The Task Force will work to continue and enhance existing resources available to the state, including the Department of Commerce and Connect Minnesota websites.

- 2. Dig once – promote coordination of infrastructure construction projects with broadband projects. Examine right-of-way issues to ensure a maximization of efficiencies to assist providers and communities.**
 - The Task Force will convene a discussion with those who are already actively pursuing policy in this area to determine lessons learned, barriers, and ways of propagating successes state-wide. The Task Force will also develop a primer on what is being done on the local and national level in this arena, and a discussion about how that does or does not meet the needs within Minnesota.
 - The Task Force will examine legislative opportunities that would eliminate barriers or propagate success and propose legislation for the 2013 legislative session if deemed necessary.

- 3. The Task Force will develop legislation for the 2013 legislative session and beyond, where needed, on policy and finance incentives. Identify, evaluate and suggest the funding resources necessary in order to reach the broadband goals and methods for generating that funding including tax incentives for broadband infrastructure; tax deduction equity for fiber, equalization of Minnesota depreciation to federal levels; tax forgiveness to build out in areas without access and/or low population.**
 - The Task Force will explore incentive opportunities through discussion with state officials, outside business groups and individual businesses.
 - The Task Force will work with personnel from the Minnesota Department of Revenue and Office of Management and Budget to gauge the impact of incentive opportunities identified as having potential success for Minnesota.

- 4. Promote current broadband mobilization efforts, including but not limited to, county and community level organizing; find ways to incent formal community broadband planning.**
 - The Task Force will survey counties in Minnesota to identify existing efforts underway that utilize comprehensive community planning in efforts to expand broadband availability and adoption, and promote such efforts where appropriate. The Task Force will continue to track such projects to completion and evaluate outcomes.
 - The Task Force will look at best practices where community planning for broadband has been/is being used and the impact (positive or negative) of those efforts and make such information available to Minnesota communities.
 - The Task Force will identify resources that are or could be made available to support such mobilization efforts.

5. Examine best practices being employed in other states and countries related to ubiquitous broadband; what initiatives have worked, what could be used in Minnesota.

- The Task Force will review reports, news articles, legislation, etc. to learn about initiatives in other states and countries.
- The Task Force will conduct outreach to other states identified as doing better than Minnesota related to progress on ubiquitous broadband and on speed and adoption measures, identifying successful initiatives for possible replication or trial in Minnesota.

6. Survey, Research, Data: Utilize existing and ongoing research capabilities for identification of levels (speed) and scope of service related to broadband accessibility; annual surveys of consumers and business, along with targeted other research; utilize existing state resources (Connect MN) to ensure an accurate understanding of the state of broadband in Minnesota.

- The Task Force will include in its annual report an updated chart of applications and upload/download speed ranges necessary for those applications to perform.
- The Task Force will review available survey research for Minnesota and mapping data and incorporate that information into the status, short- and long-range goals, and action plan contained in the Task Force's annual report.
- The Task Force will explore methods to measure broadband satisfaction of endusers.
- The Task Force will prioritize where the state should focus its efforts (on the areas with the greatest need and/or areas with the best likelihood of success).

7. Pursue collaborative strategies to expand broadband use through advanced applications such as e.government, telehealthcare, telework, and distance-learning; examine ways to measure the economic impact for Minnesota of advanced application of ubiquitous broadband (budget savings, overall economic impact, etc.).

- The Task Force will identify private and public sector organizations, including nonprofits, working on advanced application efforts and propose how those efforts can be used to meet the state broadband goals.
- The Task Force will survey existing economic data (Minnesota specific and other) on the impact of advanced applications on private sector economy and public sector budgets to provide support for broadband expansion.
- The Task Force will track, evaluate and recommend strategies to expand broadband use; serve as a repository and a resource; and suggest legislation, if appropriate, to support advanced application development, including exploring opportunities and incentives to engage state agencies in adoption of advanced applications.

8. Focus on adoption issues: who is/is not adopting high speed broadband and why; where are digital divides most prevalent (rural/urban, low income, age); identify barriers to adoption; address digital literacy and skill-building gaps.

- The Task Force will use existing Minnesota adoption data to understand and suggest approaches for addressing shortfalls.
- The Task Force will identify what groups across the state are working on adoption and digital literacy issues.
- The Task Force will identify and report on public-private partnership opportunities that could result in successful adoption outcomes.
- The Task Force will identify steps to ensure Minnesota is positioned to take advantage of federal level initiatives, such as the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) Connect2Compete program.

9. Coordination across government: ensure Minnesota's local/state/federal officials (and stakeholders) are aware of resources available across all levels of government and coordinating efforts to maximize Minnesota's ability to leverage these resources.

- The Task Force will stay informed and incorporate into its knowledge base activities to advance broadband deployment and adoption conducted by the interagency subcommittee on broadband, leadership organizations for the Association of Minnesota Counties, League of Minnesota Cities, Association of Minnesota Townships, the University of Minnesota System, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU), state library and education groups, etc. The Task Force will make this knowledge base publicly accessible and will also use this information to identify areas where coordination across government could lead to maximum leveraging of resources.
- The Task Force will engage Minnesota's Congressional delegation by providing them with updates on Task Force activity and associated research and reports on the state of broadband in Minnesota.

10. Monitor and understand the impact of FCC actions, such as the Intercarrier Compensation/Universal Service Fund (ICC/USF) Order, Connect America Fund (CAF), Lifeline and Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) actions, on Minnesota's broadband goals

- The Task Force will track FCC and PUC decisions that affect broadband deployment to understand the likely impact on the state's broadband goals. The Task Force will provide information, if appropriate, to the FCC or PUC.
- The Task Force will track providers' requests for and receipt of CAF funding, track broadband deployment based on that funding, and evaluate the impact of CAF

supported broadband expansion on the achievement of the state’s broadband goals. Monitoring requests/receipts of CAF funding and subsequent broadband deployment will be accomplished via existing resources, including: Connect MN, the Minnesota Department of Commerce and other community, state, provider, and nonprofit input.

11. Establish an ongoing, post-Task Force mechanism within state government for high-speed broadband focused efforts.

- The Task Force will include in its later work a recommendation regarding the type of entity, including support required, that should succeed it to carry on the work necessary post-2015.

The 2009 Task Force’s *Minnesota Ultra High Speed Broadband Report* included a graphic illustration that provided a framework to support their recommendations:



While this outline does not incorporate all the elements or language of this graphic, the Task Force recognizes the value of the comprehensive approach it represents and will utilize portions as appropriate in its work going forward. The outline was informed, in large part, by the ideas of *Lead*, *Oversee*, and *Stimulate* related to achieving the state broadband goals.

Conclusion

The Task Force intends this outline to serve in large part as a work plan for its period of service. As monthly meetings are held in St. Paul and around the state, the action items and recommendations presented in this document – in conjunction with the tasks described in the 2011 Task Force Report - will be a focus. Future work products will include an annual report and Broadband Plan, the first of which will be released in December 2012.

Strategies for achieving the statutory broadband goals in Minnesota will need to evolve. This outline provides a starting point that can be refined based on input and guidance from stakeholders, (including providers, public officials, adopters and non-adopters) and from Task Force findings as it engages in its work.

Appendix to January 31, 2012 Broadband Plan Outline

This appendix lists the work that the Task Force intends to accomplish over the course of its existence. The list is categorized by: those efforts that will be ongoing; information that will be gathered and reported upon by September 14, 2012; and the filing of a Broadband Plan and annual report by December 10, 2012 updated annually thereafter.

Ongoing Efforts by Task Force

The list below consists of ongoing activities that the Task Force will undertake and make results available as compiled or gathered.

- The Task Force will work to continue and enhance existing resources available to the state, including the Department of Commerce and Connect Minnesota websites.
- The Task Force will look at best practices where community planning for broadband has been/is being used and the impact (positive or negative) of those efforts and make such information available to Minnesota communities.
- The Task Force will identify what groups across the state are working on adoption and digital literacy issues.
- The Task Force will stay informed and incorporate into its knowledge base activities to advance broadband deployment and adoption conducted by the interagency subcommittee on broadband, leadership organizations for the Association of Minnesota Counties, League of Minnesota Cities, Association of Minnesota Townships, the University of Minnesota System, MNSCU, state library and education groups, etc. The Task Force will make this knowledge base publicly accessible and also use this information to identify areas where coordination across government could lead to maximum leveraging of resources.
- The Task Force will engage Minnesota's Congressional delegation by providing them with updates on Task Force activity and associated research and reports on the state of broadband in Minnesota.
- The Task Force will track FCC and PUC decisions that affect broadband deployment to understand the likely impact on the state's broadband goals. The Task Force will provide information, if appropriate, to the FCC or PUC.
- The Task Force will track providers' requests for and receipt of CAF funding, track broadband deployment based on that funding, and evaluate the impact of CAF supported broadband expansion on the achievement of the state's broadband goals. Monitoring requests/receipts of CAF funding and subsequent broadband deployment will be accomplished via existing resources, including: Connect MN, the Minnesota Department of Commerce and other community, state, provider, and nonprofit input.

September 14, 2012 Information/Status report

This status report will provide for the compilation of baseline information for the Task Force's use in preparing its Broadband Plan and initial annual report.

- The Task Force will identify existing resources that collect and present research and data on the state of broadband in Minnesota for use in identifying strategies to meet the broadband goals.
- The Task Force will convene a discussion with those that are coordinating infrastructure construction projects with broadband projects and examine right-of-way issues to ensure a maximization of efficiencies to assist providers and communities to determine lessons learned, barriers, and ways of propagating successes state-wide. The Task Force will also develop a primer on what is being done on the national level in this arena.
- The Task Force will identify and evaluate funding resources necessary in order to reach the broadband goals and methods for generating that funding, including tax incentives for broadband infrastructure; tax deduction equity for fiber; equalization of Minnesota depreciation to federal levels; tax forgiveness to build out in areas without access and/or low population through discussion with state officials and outside business groups and individual businesses.
- The Task Force will work with personnel from the Minnesota Department of Revenue and Office of Management and Budget to gauge the impact of incentive opportunities identified in the above bulletpoint as having potential success for Minnesota.
- The Task Force will survey counties in Minnesota to identify existing efforts underway that utilize comprehensive community planning in efforts to expand broadband availability and adoption, and promote such efforts where appropriate. The Task Force will continue to track such projects through to completion and evaluate outcomes. The Task Force will identify resources that are or could be made available to support such mobilization efforts.
- The Task Force will review reports, news articles, legislation, etc. to learn about initiatives in other states and countries.
- The Task Force will conduct outreach to other states identified as doing better than Minnesota related to progress on ubiquitous broadband and on speed and adoption measures; identify successful initiatives for possible replication or trial in Minnesota.
- The Task Force will identify private and public sector organizations, including nonprofits, working on advanced application efforts.
- The Task Force will survey existing economic data (Minnesota specific and other) on impact of advanced applications on private sector economy and public sector budgets to provide support for broadband expansion.
- The Task Force will identify and report on public-private partnership opportunities that could result in successful adoption outcomes.
- The Task Force will identify steps to ensure Minnesota is positioned to take advantage of federal level initiatives, such as the FCC's Connect2Compete program.

Annual Report and Broadband Plan (submitted by December 10 annually)

Guideposts for generation of a Broadband Plan and annual reports that describes the current status (where we are now), long- and short-range goals (where we are going), and action plans (how we will get there) with regard to meeting our ubiquitous broadband goal for 2015.

- The Task Force will generate a Broadband Plan and an annual report on the state of broadband that includes comprehensive analysis and recommendations.
- The annual report will reflect the work of the Task Force during the year leading up to the reporting deadline, document progress, and reflect progress toward long- and short-range goal attainment and Task Force action plans as movement towards the state broadband goals occurs and lessons are learned.
- The annual report will include, as needed, suggestions for legislation that could assist the state with meeting the broadband goals.
- The Task Force will take the information from the September 14 report on coordinating infrastructure construction projects with broadband projects and its examination of rights-of-way issues and discuss in the annual report how lessons learned can meet the needs within Minnesota and suggest proposed legislative language if needed.
- From the September 14 report, the Task Force will suggest any funding resources likely to be successful for reaching the broadband goals from among those evaluated (tax incentives for broadband infrastructure; tax deduction equity for fiber; equalization of Minnesota depreciation to federal levels; tax forgiveness to build out in areas without access and/or low population, etc.).
- The Task Force will include in its annual report an updated chart of applications and upload/download speed ranges necessary for those applications to perform.
- The Task Force will review available survey research for Minnesota and mapping data and incorporate that information into the status, short- and long-range goals, and action plan contained in the Task Force's annual report.
- The Task Force will explore methods to measure broadband satisfaction of end users.
- The Task Force will prioritize where the state should focus its efforts (on the areas with the greatest need and/or areas with the best likelihood of success)
- The annual report will take the information identifying private and public sector organizations, including nonprofits, working on advanced application efforts provided in the September 14, 2012 report and propose how those efforts can be used to meet the state broadband goals.
- The Task Force will track, evaluate and recommend strategies to expand broadband use; serve as a repository and a resource; and suggest legislation if appropriate to support advanced application development including exploring opportunities and incentives to engage state agencies in adoption of advanced applications.
- The Task Force will use existing Minnesota adoption data to understand and suggest approaches for addressing shortfalls.

- The Task Force will include in its later work a recommendation regarding the type of entity, including support required, that should succeed it to carry on the work necessary post-2015.