



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF
ADAM J. BELLO
MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE ADAM BELLO ANNOUNCES COMPLETION OF “COMMUNITY ACCESS PLAN AND FUNDING STRATEGY FOR BROADBAND” REPORT

The report, compiled by Magellan Advisors, will serve as a blueprint for the County as it determines how to leverage \$20 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding to improve internet access throughout our community.

ROCHESTER, NY — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello today released the “Community Access Plan and Strategy for Broadband” report that will serve as a blueprint for determining how to best leverage \$20 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding to improve internet access in underserved and unconnected areas of the county.

*“Our digital divide isn’t a new or unique issue, but it is one that holds too many of our residents back from fully participating in economic, educational and civic opportunities,” **said County Executive Bello.** “To truly Bring Monroe Back and reflect Monroe County’s legacy and future as an innovation hub, a great place to raise a family and a place where opportunity abounds for residents and businesses alike, we must find concrete solutions to closing service gaps and eliminating barriers to broadband access. High-speed internet is essential infrastructure — not a luxury — and is as critical to the future of our community’s growth as indoor plumbing, electricity and paved roads.”*

County Executive Bello convened government, civic and nonprofit leaders as the Monroe County Advisory Task Force on Broadband in March 2021 to assess internet services in low income and rural areas of Monroe County, with a goal of finding concrete solutions that will close service gaps and eliminate barriers to access. The county and task force partnered with Magellan Advisors to undertake a robust study of internet services county-wide and make recommendations to guide any future infrastructure or program investments.

*“Access to reliable high speed broadband internet is a critical tool to unlock economic growth and overcome racial and economic disparities across our region. We are proud to partner with County Executive Bello and colleagues on the Broadband Task Force to advance this critical project,” **said Simeon Banister, President and CEO of Rochester Area Community Foundation.** “By investing \$20 million for this essential utility, Monroe County is taking a step in the right direction to improve access to underserved disadvantaged and rural communities.”*

*“As a lifetime resident of Riga and County Legislator representing our rural communities, I know first-hand the need for expansion of high-speed broadband internet into our neighborhoods and farmlands that currently lack this basic necessity,” said **Legislature Majority Leader Steve Brew**. “Delivering high-speed broadband to these areas has been a priority of mine, and I am proud to have served on the Broadband Task Force to do just that. Today’s announcement lays the groundwork for delivering on this promise, and I will continue to work tirelessly until it is finished to the satisfaction of all our neighbors. Thank you to all the members of the Broadband Task Force and my partners in village, town, and county government who have shared in this mission that will soon be a reality.”*

*“High-speed broadband access is no longer a luxury, it’s a necessity,” said **County Legislator Howard Maffucci** (LD 10), a member of the task force. “Everyone, no matter where they live, should have access to fast, reliable, and affordable high-speed internet, and I’m proud to be working with County Executive Bello and the Broadband Task Force to ensure we can achieve that in Monroe County.”*

*“The digital divide across Monroe County became increasingly apparent and troublesome during the COVID pandemic as residents of our communities struggled with remote learning and working from home,” said **Town of Wheatland Supervisor Linda Dobson**. “It soon became clear that a large portion of Wheatland was not adequately served — our scenic, open spaces created long distances for infrastructure installation making digital access or upgrades cost prohibitive for residents. Working with Monroe County Administration and the Broadband Taskforce to clearly identify those rural areas in need and develop a response to close this connectivity gap has been a positive experience. I thank the residents who brought their needs forward, the Task Force for hours spent on this issue, Legislator Brew for his support, and for County Executive Bello and his team for their positive response to address the needs of our corner of Monroe County.”*

The County Executive set aside \$20 million of the county’s \$144 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act funds specifically to address expanding broadband access in underserved areas.

In coming weeks, the Bello administration will review the Magellan report to determine the best path forward, making certain any county plans to expand access align with New York State and nonprofit community broadband goals.

Potential investments include: partnering with private internet service providers to facilitate build-out of broadband infrastructure in rural communities; providing grants, training or one-on-one assistance to encourage more people to take advantage of the federal Affordable Connectivity Program; offering discounts on internet-capable devices to individuals who successfully complete training or education programs; or making free community WiFi hotspots available in publically-accessible areas.

The “Community Access Plan and Funding Strategy for Broadband” is available at www.monroecounty.gov.

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