



Public Works Department City of Bellingham

Broadband Advisory Workgroup

Meeting Notes

Tuesday, April 5, 2022

6:00pm – 7:45PM

Zoom

WG Members in attendance:

Spencer Moore

Michelle Kopcha

Steve Spitzer

Linda Fels

RB Tewksbury

Kristopher Keillor

Ex Officio Members in attendance:

Terry Davis

David Namura

Gina Stark

WG Members excused:

Milissa Miller

Guest Presenters:

Jory Wolf, Magellan Advisors LLC

Greg Laudeman, Magellan Advisors LLC

City Staff and Facilitator in attendance:

David Roberts, Facilitator

Eric Johnston, Public Works Director

Don Burdick, Information Technology, GIS Services Administrator

Rush Duncan, Public Works Webinar Support

1. Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review, Approval of Notes

David Roberts opened the meeting, welcomed everyone, and reviewed the agenda for the evening. Notes from last meeting are approved with no changes. Eric Johnston shared that Pogozone will do a presentation at the next meeting.

2. Review of presentation on definitions for April 25th City Council

Spencer Moore provided a dry run of his presentation for City Council currently scheduled for April 24th. Members provided a number of helpful suggestions which Spencer intends to incorporate. He requested additional comments by email. David Roberts invited voting members to participate in a final review of the presentation on April 13th at 2:00pm.

3. Magellan Advisors Status Update from Magellan Advisors

Jory Wolf and Greg Laudeman provided an update on the progress of Magellan's report to the Workgroup. The report will incorporate a conceptual design, cost, coverage estimates, financial analysis, business model information, an asset inventory and the survey results.

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A complete draft of the report will be delivered to the City by end of April and will be presented at May 3rd Broadband Advisory Workgroup meeting. Workgroup will have the month of May to review the report then have a full discussion in June meeting.

The survey is now complete. It has three major components to inform decision makers: 1) demand and willingness to pay, 2) supply (what they have today and are paying for today, and consumer preferences), and 3) geographic coverage and distribution. Affordability appears to be affecting adoption.

Comments/Discussion:

- The report says survey results not being “statistically reliable” and that 2/3rds of respondents said they would be willing to move. This data is not reflected in the chart. Suggestion was to reword this section.
 - Greg Laudeman: The first statement is related to random sampling which cannot be fully scientifically verified. The second is an error which will be corrected.
- Several recommendations made for an in-depth discussion of the survey and its accuracy at a future meeting. There are a number of unanswered questions. Since comments on the survey were provided by members of the Workgroup, members want to see how the technical memo was updated. One member said the survey is good, however it was not apparent from early discussions that the Workgroup was expected to be the primary stakeholder.
 - Jory Wolf noted the survey received a strong response with useful information. The survey was to assist in analyzing components of the marketplace (a survey of households and businesses). Comments will be incorporated into the final survey. There were no community stakeholder groups included in the scope of work. If desired, the workgroup could request an additional survey at the end of this process.
- Two ISP reps expressed concerns that current service providers are not going to be consulted regarding the survey. It is missing their perspective from a current infrastructure standpoint. The survey is not a true reflection of the capabilities of ISPs, which exceed the speeds noted in the survey. Both welcomed the opportunity to provide input. Other members shared a desire that the current ISPs be consulted.
 - Greg Laudeman welcomed any info on private-sector assets. Jory Wolf stated that Magellan's contract does not include engaging with private providers. Magellan has not attempted to miscommunicate on the scope of work.

Jory Wolf noted the technical memo provided to the Workgroup only speaks to the survey, not the final analysis of the data. The final report may be different from what is in the technical memo.

Eric Johnston recommended giving Magellan time to finish the draft version of their report. If after receiving the report, if the Workgroup wants to recommend additional work, that is appropriate. Conversations should be based on the contents of the report and the entirety of the concept. The survey results are merely one component of the final report.

Jory Wolf stated that Magellan will provide a full and thorough analysis including market conditions and rates. The survey results received were higher than expected and more than collected in other communities. The respondents were

forthright, and the report examines issues related to community adoption. The survey solicited four times the comments than were expected.

Eric Johnston confirmed that Magellan will give a high-level summary the draft report at the May 3rd meeting. Everyone will be able to review the draft during the month of May. At the June meeting the Workgroup will have an in-depth discussion of the report and its recommendations. Eric continued that the Workgroup's job is not to change the recommendations, but rather to consider if it is clear.

In July, the Workgroup should plan to be ready to go to City Council. Members are welcome to disagree with aspects of the report. The Workgroup could recommend they adopt a policy, or suggest they do some additional investigation of concepts that are unclear.

- Once again, concerns were raised about the need to have a conversation with the service providers. The report could be missing a large piece of the picture. Current assets and future plans, at least conceptually, could be shared.
 - Jory Wolf notes that Magellan does a lot of work in WA State and has had these conversations with ISPs. They know about the ISP plans, even if it is not included in their scope of work. Jory Wolf welcomes any conversations from ISPs if there is something additional, they need to share.
- A suggestion was made to remove the survey from the City's website. Eric responded that the survey is now public information, and it can't be taken down. The Workgroup could state they are dissatisfied with the survey. It is the workgroup, not Magellan, who gives their recommendation to the City Council.
 - Jory Wolf shared that technical reports are provided by Magellan so their clients are kept informed during the process. However, they are not the complete report. The Workgroup should not draw conclusions from one piece of the puzzle.

Eric Johnston recommended the Workgroup focus on moving the process along.

Steve Spitzer, Michelle Kopcha, Linda Fells, RB Tewsbury will re-send their emails on the survey to David Roberts to distribute to the entire workgroup.

4. Agenda bill and report outline

Eric Johnston shared a standard City Council agenda bill and discussed the typical components, including the Broadband Advisory Workgroup Report, and attached documents, such as the definitions, meeting summaries and the Magellan report. Eric plans to forward a sample to everyone.

Eric suggested creating a subgroup of members to draft the report for the workgroup. The work will need to be done after the Workgroup has reviewed Magellan's report. Several members indicated they are not available to work on the report until after June. Steve Spitzer recommended postponing creating the subgroups and pushing back the timeline to the council.

5. Plan for May 3rd Meeting

David Roberts confirmed the Workgroup will see the report before the May 3rd meeting and have a month to analyze it. An additional meeting in June and/or July could be added if needed.

Next meeting agenda:

- Brief discussion of the Summary of Meeting Report prepared by Michelle Kopcha, Steve Spitzer, and Terry Davis. (David will send the document out shortly.)
- Magellan presentation of their draft report.

Editor note: Eric Johnston proposed that Pogozone present to the Workgroup at the May meeting. Due to the level of interest in the Magellan report and the time needed for a full discussion, this presentation may be rescheduled. David will confirm before the meeting notice and agenda are sent out.

Meeting adjourned 8:00 PM.

Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, May 3rd, 2022 at 6:00 PM via Zoom