



Press Release

Westmoreland Broadband Internet Survey Closing Soon, More than 30 Municipalities with Less than 10 Responses

Residents and Business Owners are Encouraged to Take the Survey Before it Closes on Oct. 31

For Release on October 27, 2022

Westmoreland County, PA – The Westmoreland County Board of Commissioners encourages residents and business owners to take the Internet Survey and Speed Test from their residence or business before the Oct. 31 deadline. Participation will help to identify gaps in high-speed Internet coverage in the County.

Broadband allows users to access the Internet at significantly higher speeds than traditional “dial-up” services. Improved broadband access can be delivered through multiple technologies, including fiber optic, mobile and fixed wireless, and cable modem. The 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) defines a minimum broadband speed threshold of 100 megabits per second (Mbps) download speed and 20 Mbps upload speed.

To date, more than 2,000 surveys have been submitted. Of those surveys, 71% had a download speed of less than 100 Mbps, which by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) and PA Broadband Authority standards are categorized as underserved or unserved connections.

Many residents and business owners expressed having unreliable and unaffordable Internet as their main frustration with the lack of broadband in their areas

Of the 65 municipalities in Westmoreland County, the Townships of Derry, Fairfield, Hempfield, Ligonier, and Unity have been the most responsive to the survey. However, almost half of the municipalities have submitted less than 10 surveys.

“The survey responses will play a major role in our plans for broadband development in Westmoreland County,” said Jason Rigone, Director, Westmoreland County Planning and Development. “We want all of our municipalities strongly represented in the final report. If residents and business owners don’t complete the survey, we won’t have a complete picture of the County’s broadband needs.”

To see how many surveys were completed in your municipality or to take the survey, visit westmorelandbroadband.org. The deadline to complete the survey is Oct. 31, 2022.

As part of the Westmoreland Broadband Feasibility Study, fieldwork analysis was conducted by Michael Baker International from mid-July through October as a boots-on-the-ground effort to more accurately determine which locations in Westmoreland County have unserved or limited fixed or mobile broadband. The field teams traveled to 3,778 locations in the County to evaluate the current broadband

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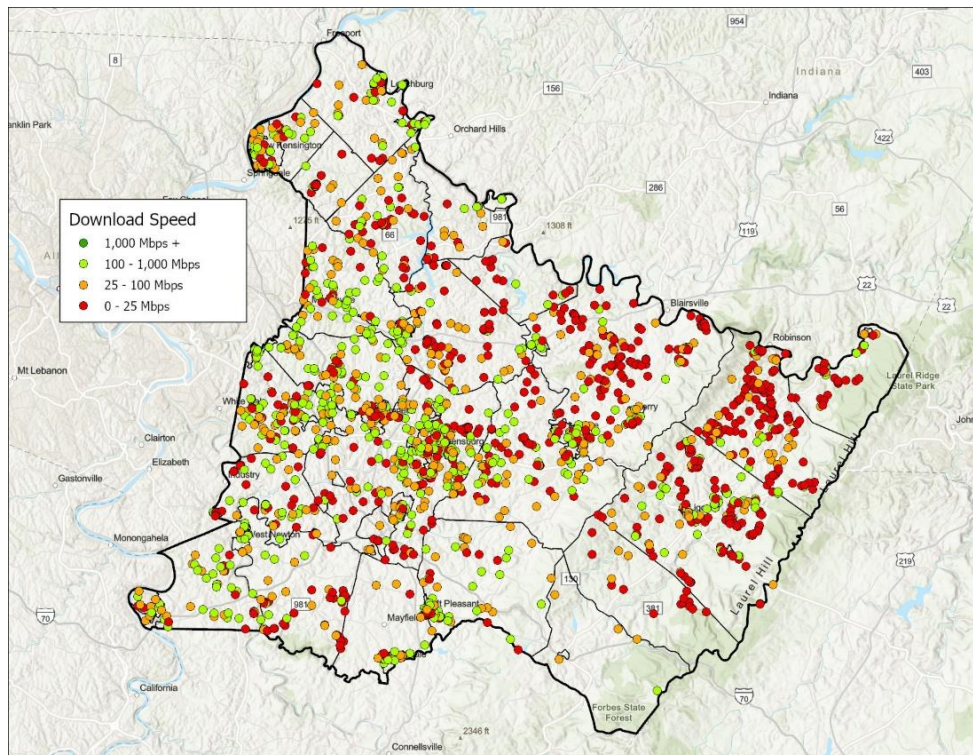
infrastructure and collect mobile download and upload speeds. Over the next month as the study comes to a close, residents may see the Michael Baker International survey team spot-checking broadband infrastructure from the road.

“Seeing the survey trucks around the County was encouraging for many residents who have been patiently waiting for high-speed Internet access,” said Corey Block, Planner, Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development. “Having accurate data is critical to identifying which areas are most in need of reliable and affordable Internet connection.”

The Feasibility Report will be finalized by the end of the year. The report will share the data and survey results as well as recommended next steps in bringing broadband to Westmoreland County.

If you have any questions regarding this study or would like to request a printed copy of the survey, please call 724-495-4350 or email feedback@westmorelandbroadband.org.

To learn more about the project and to stay up to date on the latest progress, visit westmorelandbroadband.org and join the mailing list.



This map shows the range of internet download speeds across the county obtained through more than 2,000 surveys submitted through www.westmorelandbroadband.org.

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About the Westmoreland Broadband Program

Westmoreland County Planning and Development is taking steps to ensure that all residents and businesses in Westmoreland County can connect to high-speed and reliable broadband. Working together with countywide and regional agencies, Westmoreland County is seeking to bridge the gap areas within the county for future infrastructure expansion. This will result in resilient and competitive communities throughout Westmoreland County to ensure both urban and rural communities are properly connected.

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