

City of Fort Worth, Texas
ITS Broadband Project
Recovery Plan

State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds
2025 Report

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

City of Fort Worth allocated a contribution of \$4,500,000 from ARPA funds to a Public Private Partnership to provide a municipal network that would be used as a starting place to deliver Broadband throughout the City, with a focus on underserved areas. The investment in Fort Worth will create over 300 miles of a new fiber network to serve ~200+ government sites and the backbone network for fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) deployment to residential and business customers.

Uses of Funds

Expenditure Category: 3.4-Public Sector Capacity: Effective Service Delivery

This project falls under Expenditure Category 3.4 Public Sector Capacity: Effective Service Delivery. The City of Fort Worth allocated \$4,500,000 in ARPA funds to support the construction of a municipal fiber network in partnership with Sprocket Networks. The funds are being used for engineering, permitting, and construction of over 300 miles of fiber infrastructure to support both City operations and to provide a foundation for residential broadband access, particularly in underserved neighborhoods. This investment will improve the availability and affordability of high-speed broadband, expand access to public services, and strengthen the capacity and efficiency of municipal operations.

Promoting equitable outcomes

Recommendations from the economic development strategy included:

- Targeted investments in broadband Internet for underserved areas of the city.
- Creation of an Economic Development Bond Package and partnering with private-sector service providers to invest in communication technology infrastructure, particularly in areas with high concentrations of tech firms and entrepreneurs. This package encompasses high-speed broadband Internet (similar to Google Fiber and Chattanooga's Gig) and investments in 5G mobile technology and other emerging technologies pivotal for business and personal communication.

Needs Assessment: The COVID-19 pandemic further underscored the deficiency in scalable, future-proof broadband services across the US, including Fort Worth. Specifically, at least nine areas in the east, south, and southeast of Fort Worth exhibited:

- Limited availability of broadband services scalable to 100Mbps download and 100 Mbps upload speeds, with fiber-to-the-home service primarily confined to areas outside these nine identified zones.
- A significant population lacks connected devices (over 10%) and subscriptions to broadband services (also over 10%).
- Low student access to broadband at home, with several ZIP codes in the east, south, and southeast Fort Worth lacking high-speed Internet connections

Performance

Funds have been issued to Sprocket in the amount of \$4.5M. The Sprocket team continues to work on engineering and design, permits have been issued, and construction is in progress.

High-level projections anticipate that underground footage per crew per day will be approximately 500 upon fully-funded deployment, but single crews were assigned to each of the three construction zones until full funding was secured. With funding recently secured by Sprocket, more crews will be deployed, and we will be able to monitor the accuracy of their projections. To support transparency and project oversight, Sprocket is developing a project management dashboard that will track key milestones and performance metrics.

Accomplishments

- Hired a construction firm with experience in fiber broadband network development to build the backbone and FTTH infrastructure.
- Secured private investment to complement Federal funding, enhancing the project's financial sustainability and timeline.

Ongoing and completed

Sprocket has hired a new construction firm to build the backbone and FTTH network and has partnered with a private investment firm for the project. The chosen construction firm has substantial experience in building fiber broadband networks and will be responsible for maintaining a sufficient supply of labor for the duration of the construction period and mitigating disruptions to the construction timeline. The vendor has been proactively collaborating with the City's Public Works professionals to ensure compliance with all local guidelines, and both City and State-level construction permit applications have been approved. Supervised site visits are underway to confirm route alignment and site readiness. Additional construction crews are expected to be deployed to help prevent schedule delays and maintain progress across all construction zones.