



APPLICATION

South Carolina 2021 Rural Broadband Grant Program

Applicant Information

Applicant Name/Organization **Farmers Telephone Cooperative, Inc.**

Applicant FCC Registration Number (FRN) **0001887025**

Primary Contact Name **F. Bradley Erwin**

Title **CEO**

Mailing Address **1101 E. Main Street**

Phone Number **843-382-1225**

City, State, Zip **Kingstree, SC 29556**

Email **erwinb@ftc.org**

Broadband Service Provider Experience

Date of Applicant's Initial FCC Form 477 Submission **12/31/1999**

Date of Applicant's Most Recent FCC Form 477 Submission **12/31/2020**

Applicant and/or Project Partner has Experience:

- Delivering broadband service via fiber and/or hybrid fiber-coax infrastructure
- Delivering broadband service via fixed wireless infrastructure
- Building and operating broadband networks in rural areas
- Operating broadband networks in low-moderate income areas

Project Area Information

Eligible County Impact

Counties
(list) **Lee**

Cities/Towns/Municipalities
(list)

Households **482**

Businesses **13**

Health Care Facilities **0**

Community Anchor Institutions **7**

Educational Institutions **0**

Contiguous County Impact

Counties
(list)

Cities/Towns/Municipalities
(list)

Households

Community Anchor Institutions

Businesses

Educational Institutions

Health Care Facilities

Broadband Infrastructure Information

Indicate the type(s) of broadband infrastructure technology to be deployed in the project area.

Fiber to the Premises Minimum Sustainable Download/Upload Speeds 100/20

Hybrid fiber-coax Minimum Sustainable Download/Upload Speeds
(*symmetrical upload/download speeds*)

Hybrid fiber-coax Minimum Sustainable Download/Upload Speeds
(*non-symmetrical upload/download speeds*)

Fixed wireless Minimum Sustainable Download/Upload Speeds

Broadband Pricing Schedules or Tiers

Indicate all rate tiers for wireline projects of at least 100/20 Mbps or fixed wireless at 50/5 Mbps or faster that will be offered to customers in the project area:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rates less than \$10/month | <input type="checkbox"/> Rates between \$20 - \$24.99/month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rates between \$10 - \$14.99/month | <input type="checkbox"/> Rates between \$25 - \$34.99/month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rates between \$15 - \$19.99/month | |

Project Timeline

Project Start Date **7/19/2021**

Customer Premises

Project Construction Activity Begins **7/19/2021**

Installations Begin **8/9/2021**

Project Construction Activity Complete **10/28/2022**

Installations End **10/28/2022**

Overall Project Completion Date **10/31/2022**

Project Cost Information

Total Project Cost **\$1,280,000.00**

Average Cost per Location Served
(all locations or structures) **\$2550.00**

Upfront Cost Requirements

Cost of Building and/or Extending
Infrastructure to Customer Premises

Average Cost per Housing Unit **\$2550.00**

Average Cost per Business **\$2550.00**

Project Funding Information

South Carolina Rural Broadband Grant Program Funds requested (\$) **\$640,000.00**

Applicant-Provided Funding (\$) **\$640,000.00 - FTC, Inc.**

Non-Public Funding

Amount (\$) **NA**

Source(s) **NA**

Additional Information

- 1) Describe Applicant's and/or project Partner's experience building and/or operating broadband networks.

Founded in 1951, Farmers Telephone Cooperative, Inc. was created as a means for those in the rural areas to receive communication services. In 1995, FTC was the first company in its five-county service territory to launch internet service which began as traditional dial-up systems. Just six years later in 2001, FTC established itself as an internet service provider and the first broadband connections were deployed starting with an internet speed of 1.5 Mbps downstream by 512 Mbps upstream. In 2006, the Cooperative began offering broadband over fiber and currently serves more than 10,500 internet customers with a fiber connection. This fiber is almost 100% buried, which adds additional protection to the network. FTC has 19 years' experience designing, building, and operating broadband networks.

- 2) Describe how your proposal meets the needs of the community to be served as described in the "Guidelines."

The locations selected for our applications are considered by ORS as priority areas. With fiber to the premise, FTC will enhance the community and families it serves by future proofing their broadband connection providing unlimited capabilities for telemedicine opportunities, online learning, work from home applications, and the bandwidth capability to handle numerous devices working within the home network simultaneously. As a Cooperative, we are committed to bringing the most advanced technologies in the industry to improve the lives of our members/customers and building fiber to the communities we serve leads the way.

- 3) Describe any plans or programs you have developed to improve adoption in the community described in this proposal. Please include letters of support from key community partners that indicate their awareness of your project.

Over the years, FTC has placed a significant focus educating our members/customers on the importance of having an Internet connection. In addition, consistent messaging to educate the consumer on bandwidth requirements based on the number of devices being used in the home and the strain being placed on the home network when you are not on the right Internet plan.

To also assist with adoption, the Cooperative has excellent internet plan pricing with multiple speed options. FTC's current internet plans include basic wi-fi at no additional charge and beginning October 1, 2020, our plans will include enhanced wi-fi coverage as well as parental controls guided by a new FTC Wi-Fi app. FTC has a very rewarding multi-service discount program that provides pricing incentives to assist customers with their respective monthly billing.

Our fiber internet plans are symmetrical. Please review the fiber delivered symmetrical speed options that are available:

50 Mbps/50 Mbps
100 Mbps/100 Mbps
500 Mbps/500 Mbps
1 Gig/1 Gig

Please see attached pricing sheet.

- 4) Provide documents that demonstrate your organization currently has the necessary funds (50% of total project cost) to complete this project/proposal. List documents here and attach documents to this proposal.

Please see attached Bank of America note.

- 5) List any lease, franchise agreement, interconnection agreement, authorization, permit, or other items needed to complete this project.

- necessary highway permits

Attachments and Exhibits

Please attach the following items to application:

- Map of project area (*PDF and Shapefile formats*)
- Letters of support evidencing community need and strategic partnerships
- Any additional information evidencing community need for project
- Most recent FCC Form 477 filing

Certification and Signature

CERTIFICATION: The Applicant certifies that information included in this application is factual to their knowledge.

Signature:



Print Name of Signatory: F. Bradley Erwin

Title of Signatory: CEO

Date: 5/10/2021

All questions and completed applications should be submitted to Broadband@ORS.SC.GOV

Facsimile signatures and email signatures shall be as effective as original signatures to bind any party.



South Carolina
Department of Commerce



LEE COUNTY



OFFICE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

ALAN W. WATKINS
ADMINISTRATOR

P.O. BOX 309
BISHOPVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA 29010
(803) 484-5341

JULIE P. STOKES
ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR

April 30, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of Lee County Council to express the full support of Council for the ORS Grant being sought by FTC to provide additional broadband services to homes and businesses within its service area, which includes Lee County residents. The importance of access to high-speed internet service for work and educational opportunities has never been greater, and the impacts of the recent pandemic have helped to even more clearly demonstrate this need in rural areas such as Lee County.

FTC has been a strong partner to the communities it serves in rural SC for many years. Access to high-speed broadband is becoming a more essential tool for rural communities as they strive to compete with more urbanized communities in the area of economic development. Workforce development and educational opportunities are vital as rural communities work to stem the loss of population and attract the tax base needed to provide for the needs of our citizenry in an increasingly competitive climate.

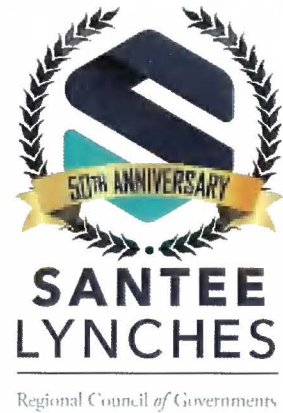
Please let me know if I can provide any additional information on behalf of FTC in support of this grant opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Watkins".

Alan Watkins

Cc: Travis Windham- Chairman, Lee County Council



May 4, 2021

REFERENCE: Grant Request Letter of Support

Dear South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff,

On behalf of the Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments, please accept this letter of support for projects proposed and led by Farmers Telephone Cooperative (FTC).

Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments serves as the regional planning district for a four-county area of South Carolina, including Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, and Sumter Counties. Among the many services Santee-Lynches provides to the regional local governments and other public and private partners is the study and research for expanding broadband accessibility to underserved and unserved parts of the four-county region. Through funding provided by the Economic Development Administration (EDA), we are currently engaged in a region-wide broadband implementation plan. This plan will serve as a guide for local policymakers as they evaluate and plan for the expansion of broadband access.

The objectives of this project align well with our current Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) objectives. These objectives address priorities identified in stakeholder engagement sessions and provide the pathway to create successful strategies to help local governments and organizations assess their progress in the region while maintaining a unified approach to the success of the region.

This project has the full support of Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments, and I encourage you to fund this project to enhance our communities while creating resilience for both citizens and businesses alike.

Sincerely,

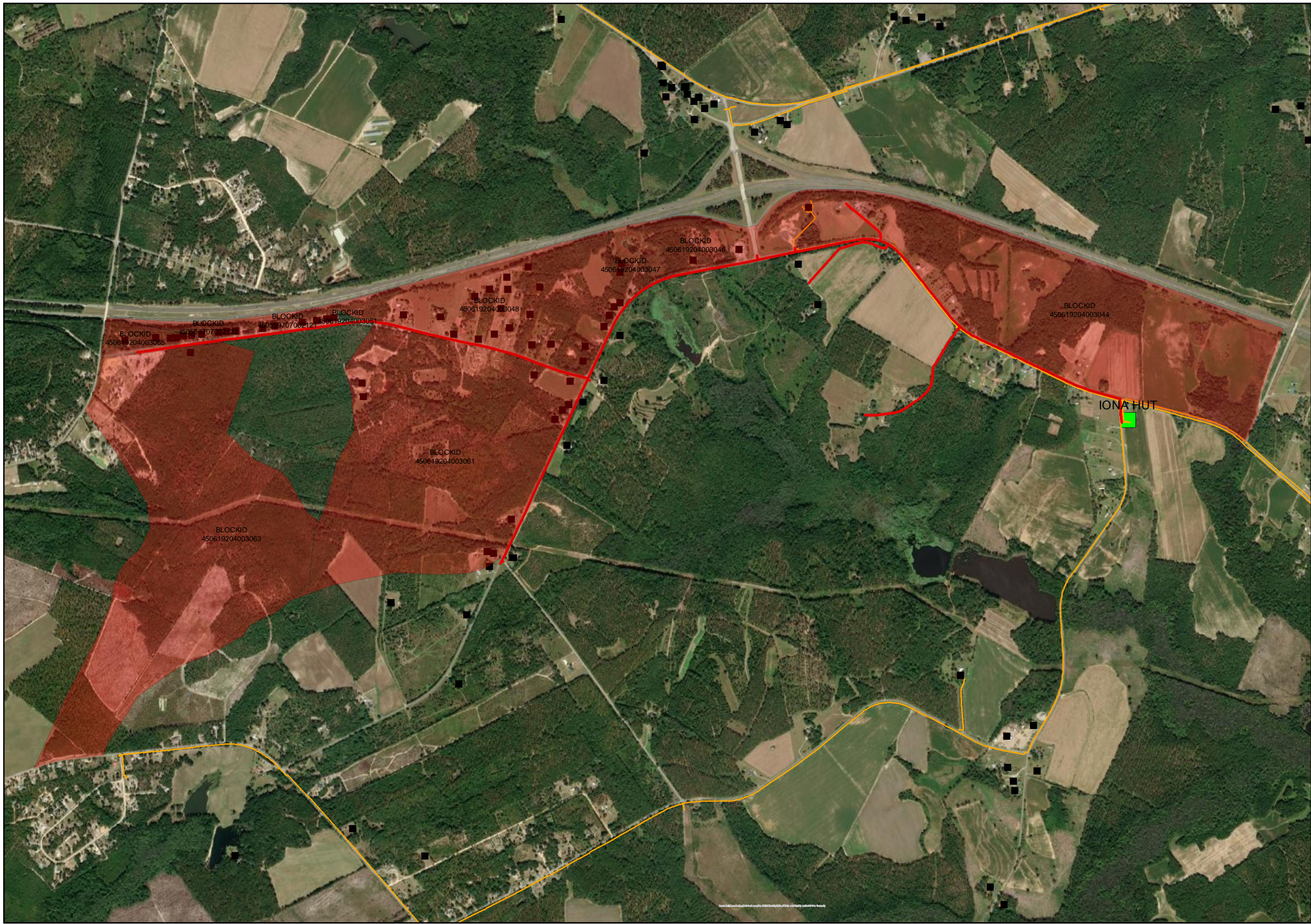
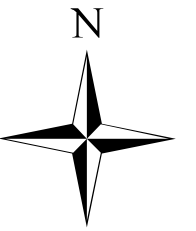
Christopher H. McKinney

Christopher H. McKinney
CEO/Executive Director

Our people first, ALWAYS!




www.SanteeLynchesCOG.org

2525 Corporate Way / Suite 200 / Sumter, SC 29154 • Phone: 803.775.7381 / Fax: 803.773.9903

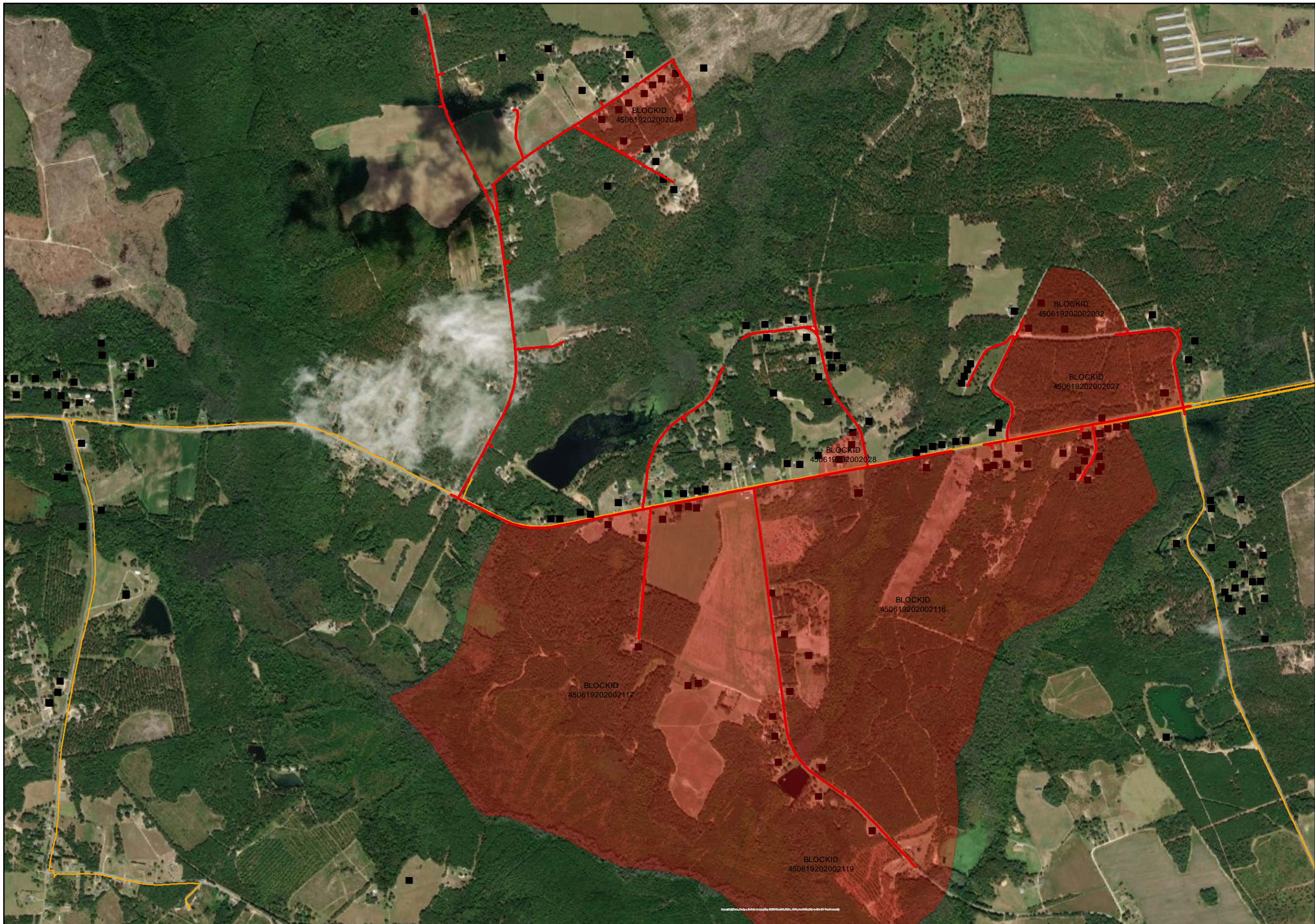
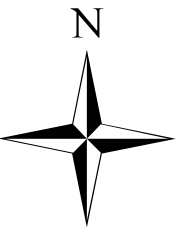


Work Order
LEE_OR_1

Printed
APR 27, 2021

- Legend**
-  0% Blocks
 -  Proposed Cable
 -  Unserved Addresses



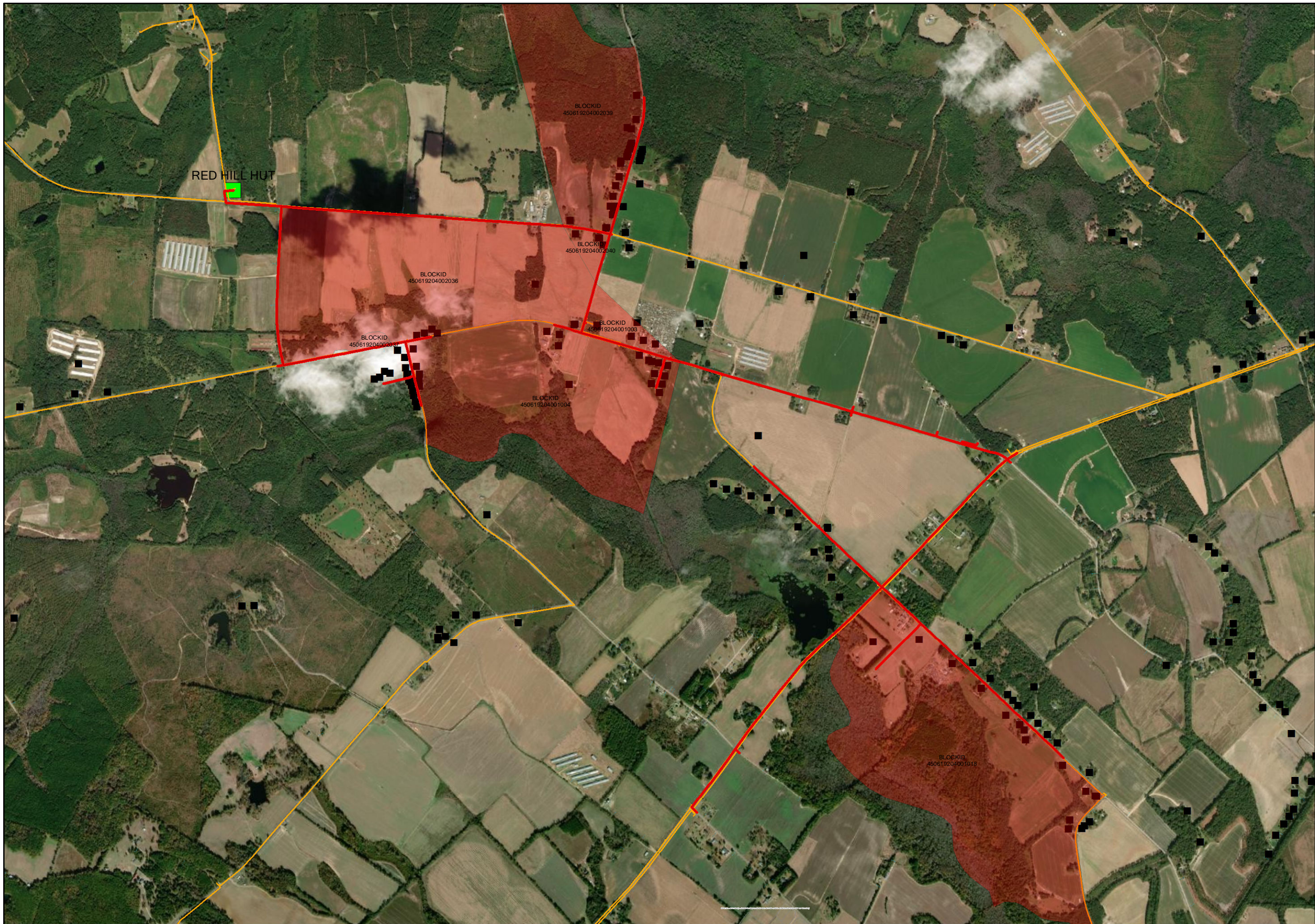
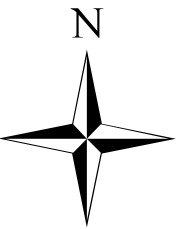


Work Order
LEE_2

Printed
APR 27, 2021

- Legend**
- 0% Blocks
 - Proposed Cable
 - Unserved Addresses



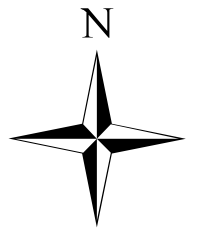
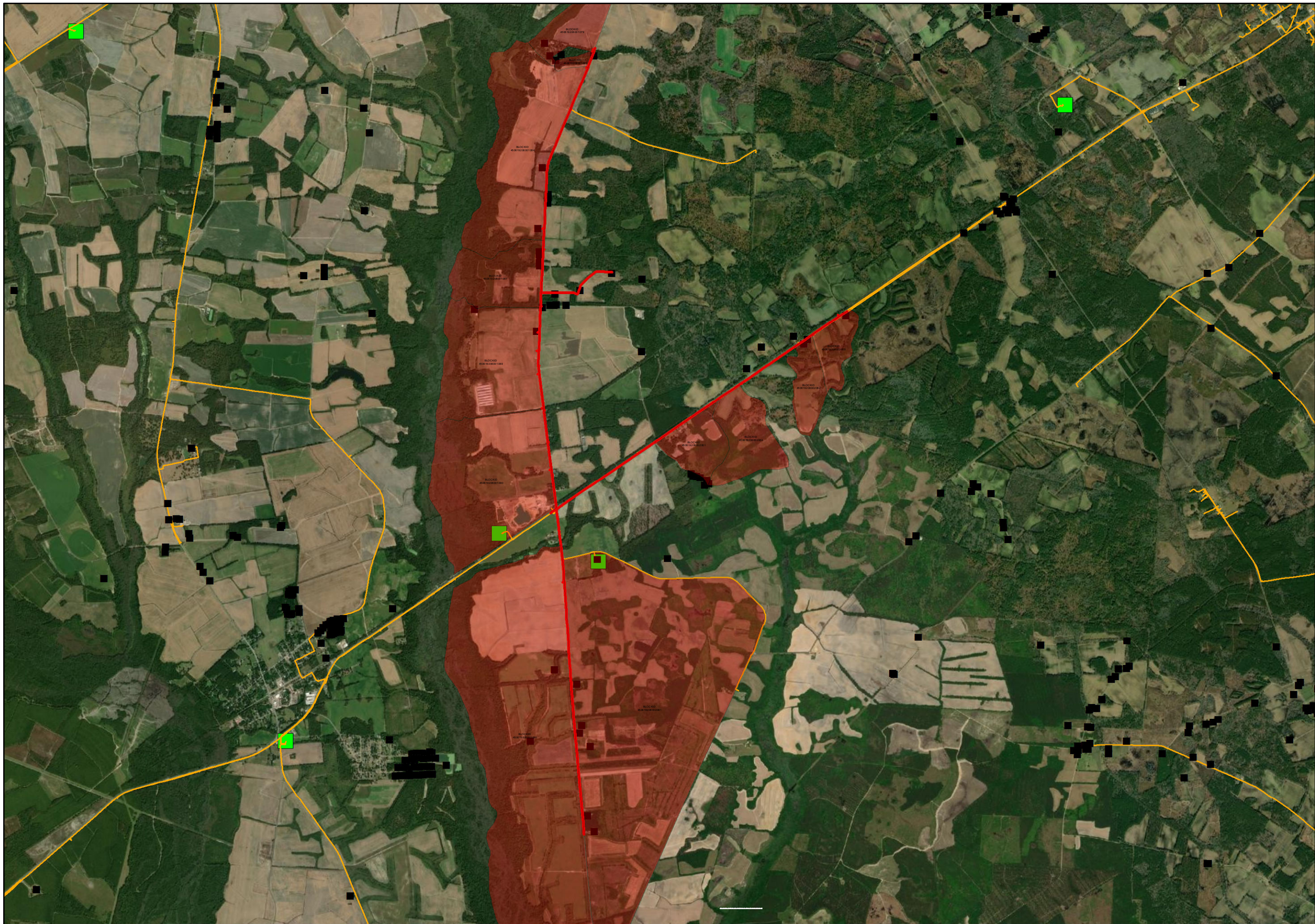


Work Order
LEE_3

Printed
APR 27, 2021

- Legend**
- 0% Blocks
 - Proposed Cable
 - Unserved Addresses





Work Order
LEE_4

Printed
APR 27, 2021

- Legend**
- 0% Blocks
 - Proposed Cable
 - Unserviced Addresses



Fiber Internet Residential Plans

25 Mbps/3 Mbps	\$34.95
50 Mbps/50 Mbps	\$39.95
100 Mbps/100 Mbps	\$49.95
500 Mbps/500 Mbps	\$59.95
1 Gig/1Gig	\$69.95