AGENDA ITEM: 4-E

PREPARED BY: Nicholas Dybas, Associate Regional Planner

SUBJECT:

ReConnect Loan and Grant Program

Enclosure: No

Action: Information and Discussion Only

SUMMARY:

The ReConnect Program of the USDA-Rural Utilities Service is currently open and making $1.15 billion of Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funds available for broadband infrastructure projects serving rural communities. ReConnect can support efforts to close the digital divide in rural areas. Applicants can submit their applications until 11:59 A.M. Eastern Time on November 2, 2022.

Under the IIJA, ReConnect is providing $350 million in grants, without any matching funds requirement, available to Tribes, Socially Vulnerable Communities, Alaska Native Corporations, projects serving colonias, and projects serving Persistent Poverty Counties. The IIJA is also offering $200 million in grants, without any matching funds requirement, available for projects proposing Service Areas that are 90% underserved. Additionally, this funding round is providing competitive loan/grant combinations and first come first serve loan only financing for eligible projects. The Scoring Criteria offers applicants various ways to distinguish and make their application more competitive.

For more information, resources about ReConnect, critical mapping data for applications, and other USDA programs that support broadband infrastructure and telecommunications services in rural areas, please refer to the following link: https://www.usda.gov/reconnect

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact to the approved 2022-23 Overall Work Program and Budget.