Memo

Subject: Broadband Survey Results
To: Temple Select Board
From: Temple Broadband Subcommittee
Date: 6/4/2020

The Broadband Survey was completed May 4, 2020 and had 175 responses. Using an estimate of 617 households in town that's a 28.4% response rate, which is a good return. We converted the raw data to a more useful electronic form and performed a basic analysis via a spreadsheet.

The data shows a snapshot of the town and provides a fair idea of how the internet is used. It also provides good data on user satisfaction. Ultimately we will need the result of a Request For Information (RFI) to get actionable data. Bond funding is tied to underserved areas based on bandwidth availability. As a result, we need information on which locations qualify for bond funding.

The Data

The tallying and analysis of the raw data was simple and straightforward.

The Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in town varied. Comcast was listed on 83 responses, Consolidated on 51, TDS on 25, Cell Phone on 7, Other on 5, Satellite on 3, and 1 was unknown.

Satisfaction was selected from Very Satisfied (Score 1) to Neutral (3) to Very Dissatisfied (5), overall satisfaction was an average of 2.87, slightly better than neutral. Two surveys had a blank satisfaction score.

The survey asked how often users used Email, Browsing, Home Based Business, School, Shopping, Social Media, Stream Music or TV, Telecommuting, and Video Calls. Based on those results the most used functions in order are: Email, Browsing, Social Media, Shopping, Streaming, Video Calls, Home Business, Telecommuting, and School.

The survey asked how important faster internet service was. Importance was selected from Very Important (score 1) to Neutral (3) to Very Unimportant (5). Overall importance of faster internet scored an average of 1.67 or a bit more important than Somewhat Important (a score of 2).

A Different View

Given that Comcast is 83 out of 175 surveys, or about 47%, it appears about half the survey participants have broadband. The question arises, what if we divide the survey data into "with" and "without" broadband. The definition of broadband that most of the funding rules use is 25 mbps or more download and 3 mbps or more upload speed.

The survey data shows 78 users with speeds below 25 mbps (46 of those with less than 10 mbps) and 70 users with speeds of 25 mbps or higher, 27 users did not report a speed. The average satisfaction scores of those without broadband are 3.37, below neutral and nearing somewhat dissatisfied. Those with broadband averaged 2.17, better than somewhat satisfied. More importantly, there is an entire level of satisfaction (2.17 to 3.37 for a difference of 1.2) between the two groups. If we look at importance of faster internet, those without broadband have an average score of 1.4, (better than somewhat important), those with broadband average a 1.8 (still slightly better than somewhat important).

The Comments

The survey allowed space for comments. Comments were somewhat "all over the map". As a result it is somewhat hard to analyze the comment sections. However, some recurring topics did arise. Several users stated that Comcast was expensive. Several stated it was difficult or expensive to get Comcast to expand to their house. Several others complain about cost of current service. Some complain about cost but were not specific (cost of current service or to add broadband?). A few (less than 5) comments were concerned that taxes will go up to pay for broadband. Several comments about sole supplier issues, people appear to want options. Several complaints about reliability. A couple people asking about/recommending a municipal or town owned network.

The raw comments can be easily extracted from the data and provided if that helps.

Conclusion

It appears both those with and without broadband think faster internet is somewhat important. It appears that those with broadband are maybe somewhat satisfied with their service while those without broadband are less than neutral in satisfaction. So satisfaction appears to be somewhat tied to availability of broadband.

Based on the comments as a whole, it appears that many people feel something should be done. The comments paint a picture of the current situation being too slow / expensive / unreliable / having insufficient competition / being unavailable / …

Installation of inexpensive fiber-based broadband in at least the no/low coverage areas may be the best single solution aimed at the widest range of complaints. This is also the area in which funding is most likely to be available. At this point, we recommend moving forward with the RFI.