



# Bridging the Digital Divide in the San Diego Region

2022 City County Conference

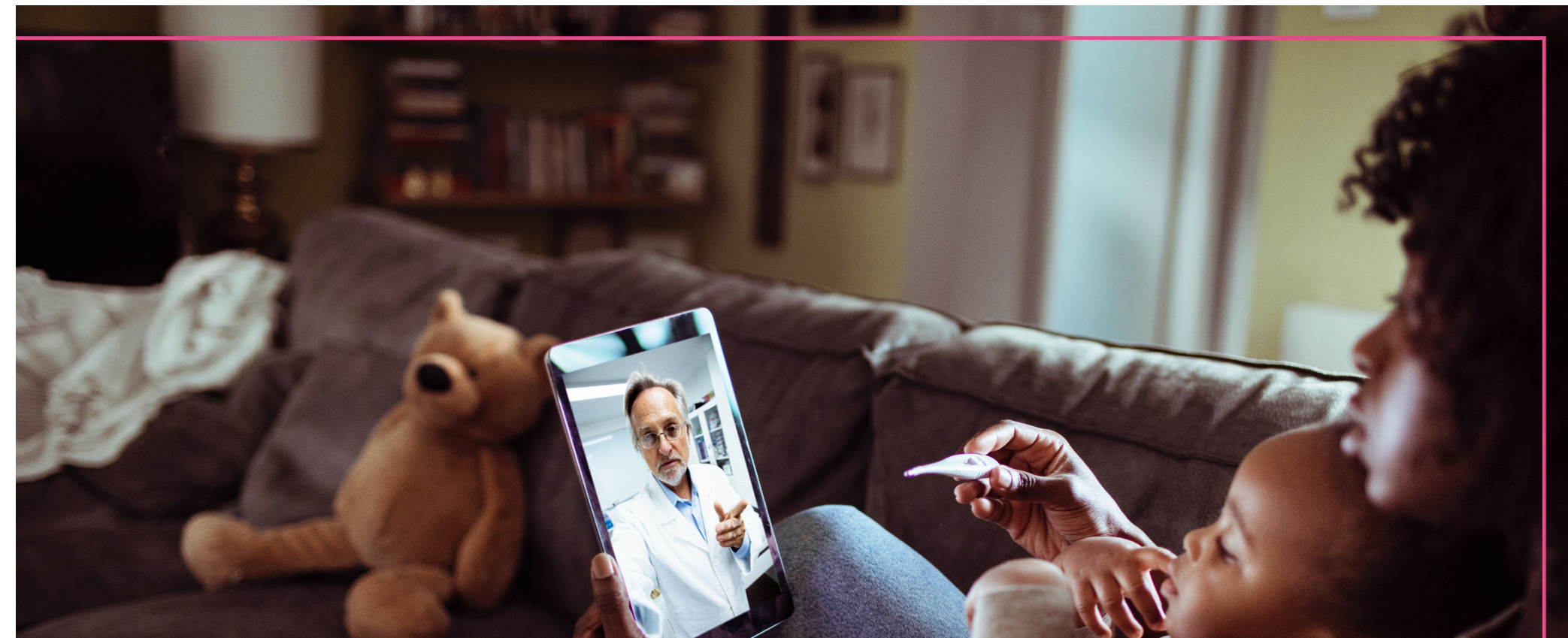
April 7, 2022

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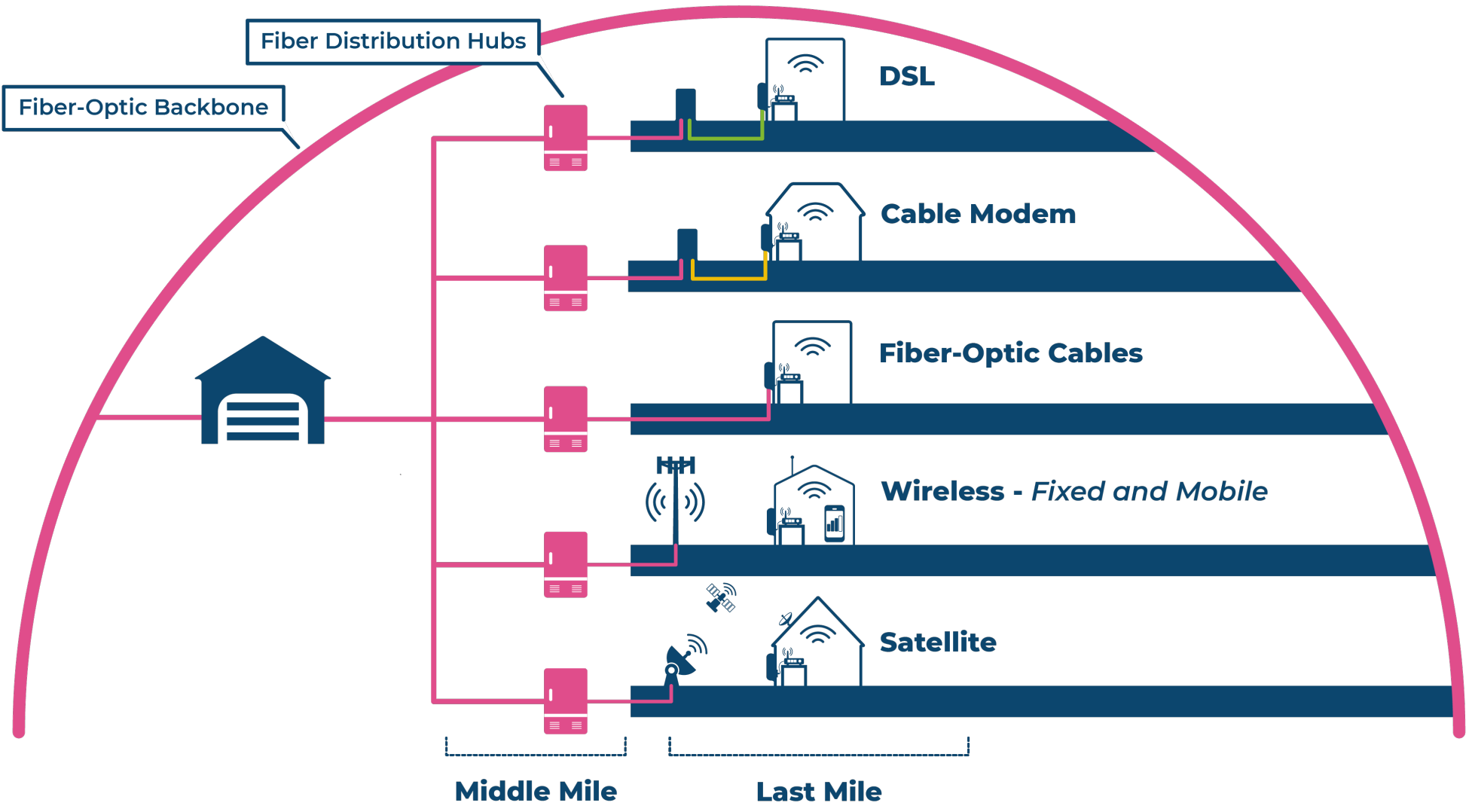


**High-speed internet access is critical to economic opportunity, education, and public health and safety**

Digital infrastructure and broadband is essential to transportation



**SANDAG**



# How we got here

**August 2020**

Governor signs Executive Order N-73-20

California's New Broadband Standard  
**100/20 Mbps**  
Download and upload speeds

**December 2020**

State Broadband Action Plan (CA Broadband for All)



**March 2021**

Digital Divide Taskforce finalizes vision, goals, and guiding principles; kick off regional broadband gap analysis

**May 2021**

SANDAG, Caltrans, and County of San Diego partner on SR-67 Dig Once Demonstration



**November 2020**

SANDAG joins forces with SCAG and other regional leaders as part of SoCal Transformation

**January 2021**

SANDAG approves Board Resolution 2021-09 & formation of Regional Digital Divide Taskforce

**April 2021**

SANDAG & Caltrans identify gap in fiber along SR-67

**June 2021**

SANDAG partners with Cisco Systems to co-develop community success roadmap



# How we got here

## September 2021

Cisco completes 60+ stakeholder interviews

Digital Divide Story Map published



## November 2021

Federal infrastructure package signed - **\$65 billion** for broadband

## December 2021

Digital Equity Action Plan adopted by Board of Directors

## July 2021

State passes historic broadband investment via SB156

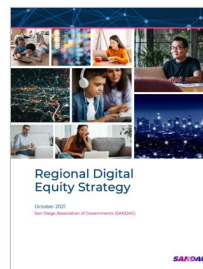
SB4 and AB14 expand broadband funding through the CA Advanced Services Fund

**\$6 billion**

over three years as part of a statewide plan to expand broadband infrastructure, increase affordability, and enhance access to broadband for all Californians.

## October 2021

Regional Digital Equity Strategy released and presented to the Board on 10/22



State announces 18 statewide open-access middle-mile initial locations – 4 corridors in San Diego county (SR 67, 76, 78, 79)



## VISION

**We envision a region where everyone has access to high-quality broadband connectivity and the tools and skills needed to use technology to improve their lives.**

## GOALS

### Access

- High-quality broadband service is available to every household in every community.
- Affordable high-quality broadband plans are available to everyone regardless of income.
- A secure device and privacy preserving access are available to everyone regardless of income.

### Adoption

- Everyone has the digital skills, tools, and resources needed to safely, securely, and privately use information and communication technology to improve their lives.
- Digital content is designed for everyone to access with ease regardless of ability, age, income, or language.

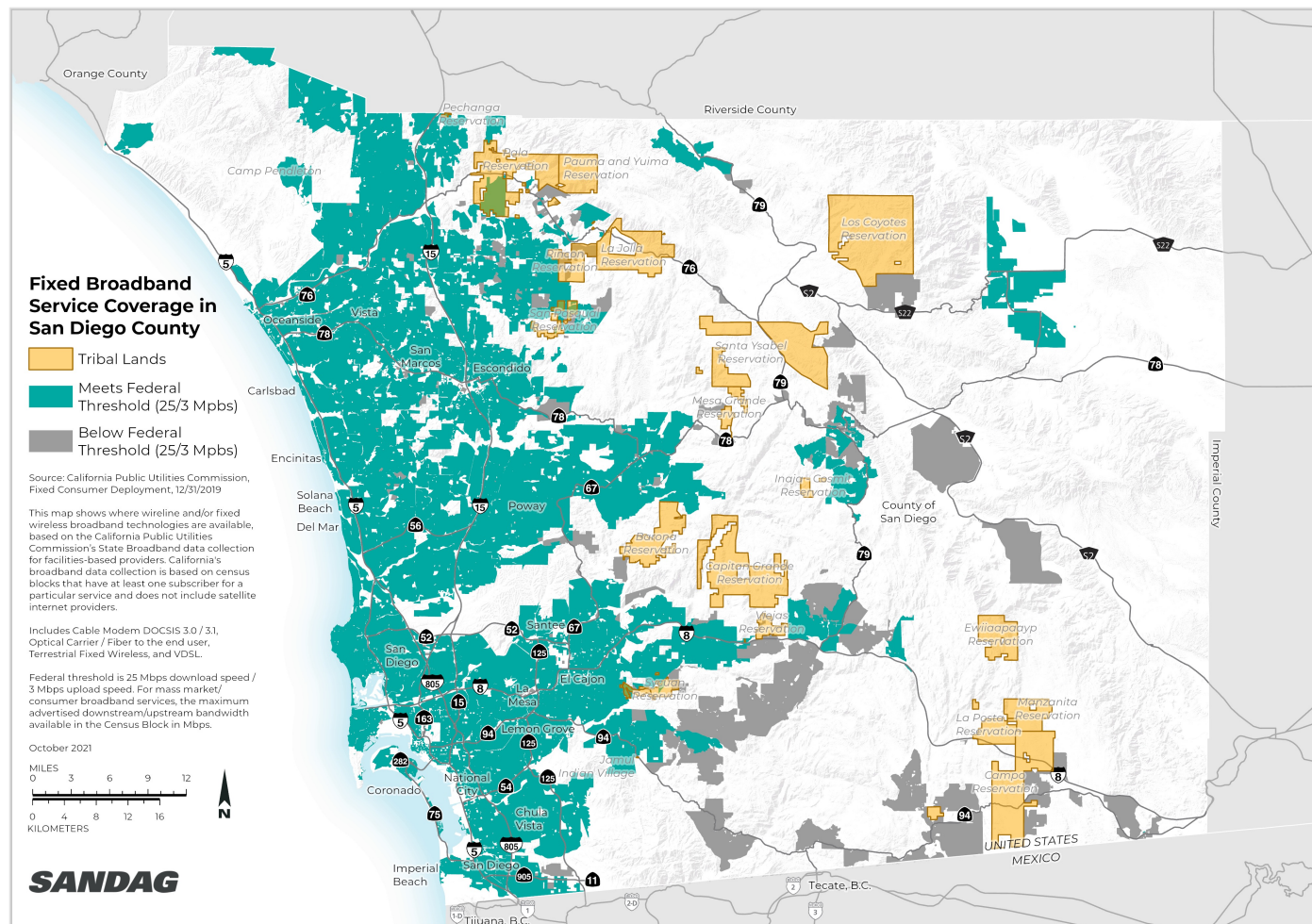


# Digital Divide in the San Diego Region

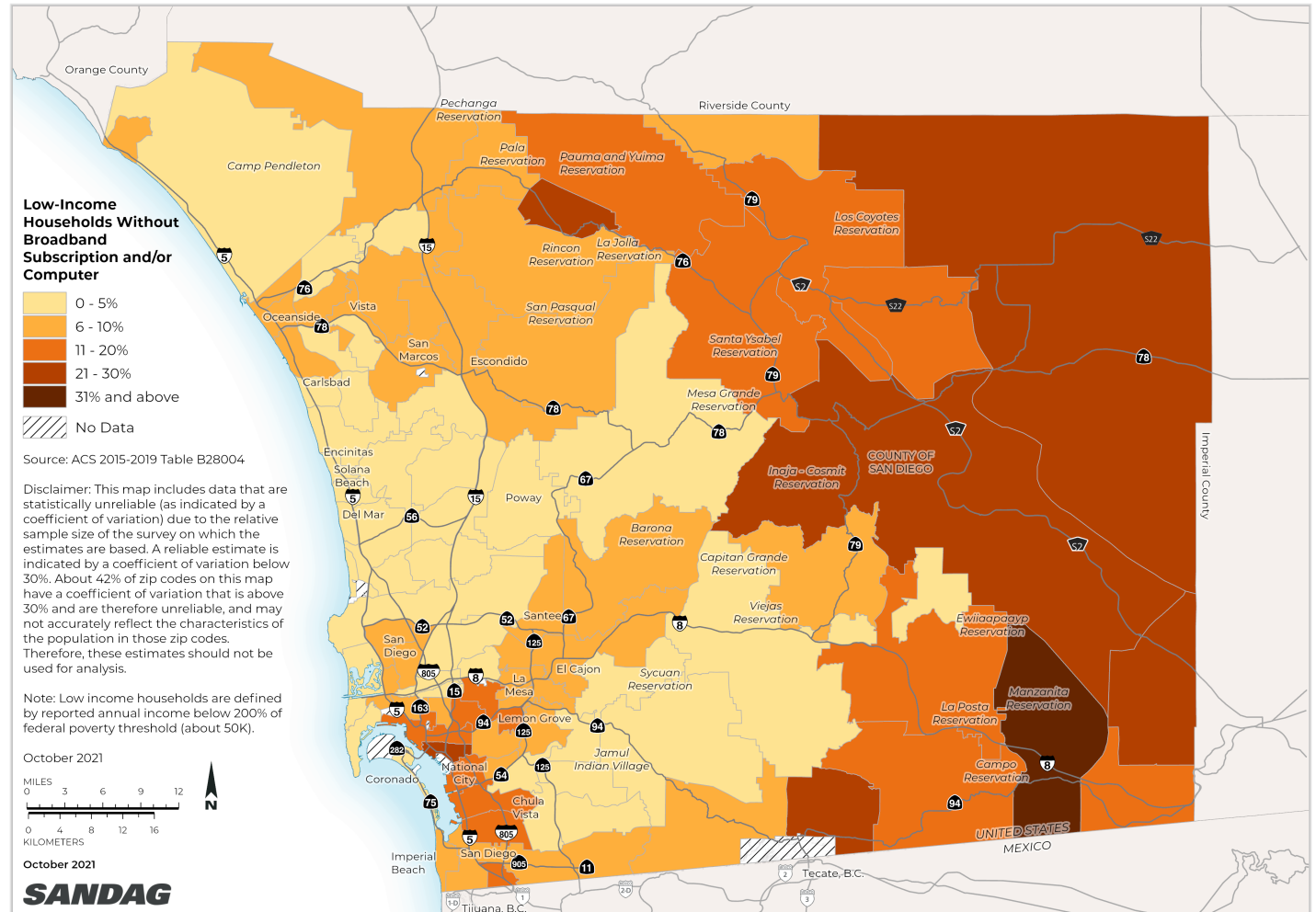
- **94%** of the population in urban areas of the region have access to broadband, compared to **66%** in rural areas
- **21%** of households earning less than \$50,000/year and **17%** of seniors age 65+ do not have a broadband subscription and/or computer at home
- **20 – 40%** of students in many local districts lack home internet access
- **39%** of businesses and **42%** of employees reported problems with poor Internet access while working at home during the pandemic



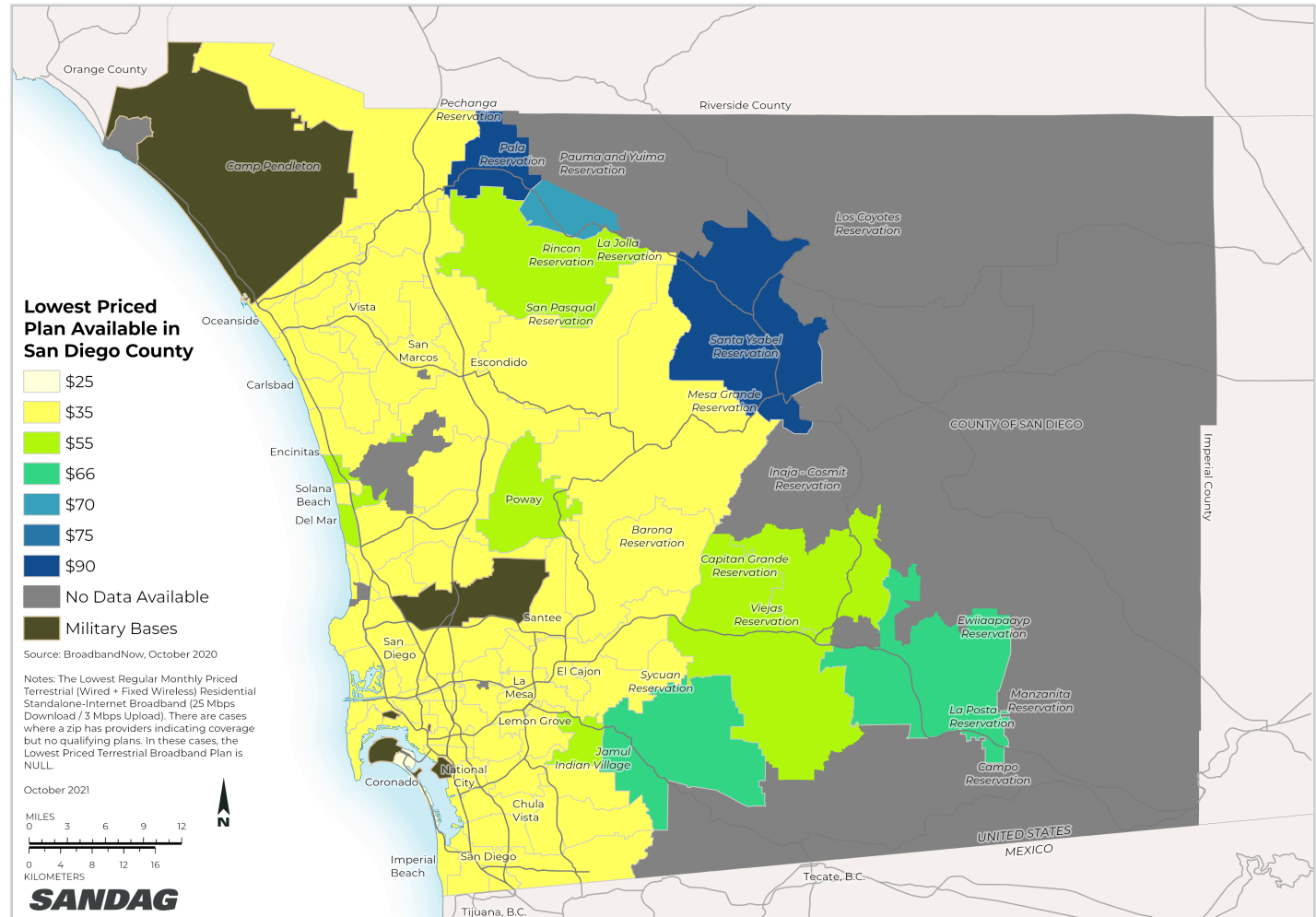
# Fixed broadband services are not available in rural areas and tribal lands in the San Diego Region



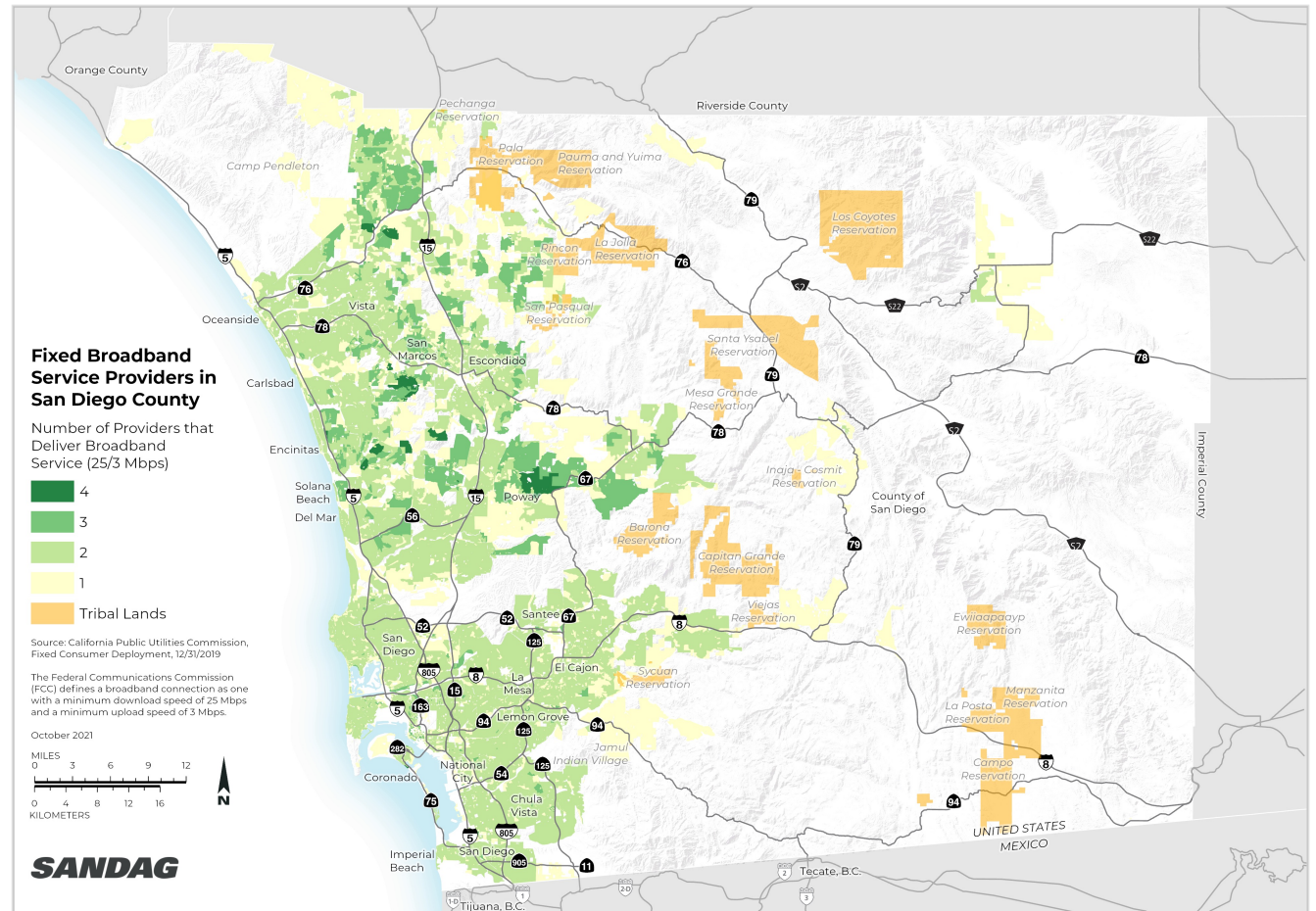
# Low-income households are less likely to have internet at home



Cost of service is a significant barrier to adoption – especially in rural and tribal areas



# Broadband provider choices are limited in the San Diego Region





# Slow and costly broadband deployment

## Local agency permitting and policy practices



*Lack of organized and accessible information on policies and permitting*



*Inconsistencies in permitting and implementation practices between jurisdictions*



*Uncertain timelines and cost*



*Restrictive policies and prohibitive conditions that don't comply with FCC Guidelines*



*Lack of standards for microtrenching; Dig Once isn't working*

# Strategies to improve broadband access and adoption



Build consensus that high-quality, reliable, and affordable broadband is an essential public service that contributes toward greater equity.



Incorporate broadband into regional and local plans.



Drive the expansion of a resilient, reliable, and redundant open access middle-mile fiber network.



Build collaborative partnerships with ISPs to connect middle-mile expansion with last mile deployment in hard-to-reach areas.



Strengthen partnerships with and between public agencies, community-based organizations, libraries, education and research institutions.



Advocate for better public data and greater transparency around household-level service availability, performance, and cost.



Advocate for and seek sustainable funding for digital equity programming.



# Cisco Systems Community Success Partnership

SANDAG partnered with Cisco Systems to codevelop a roadmap to streamline the deployment of broadband, *especially in those areas that are underserved.*



*Understand stakeholder viewpoints*



*Distill data collected*



*Co-create actionable recommendations*

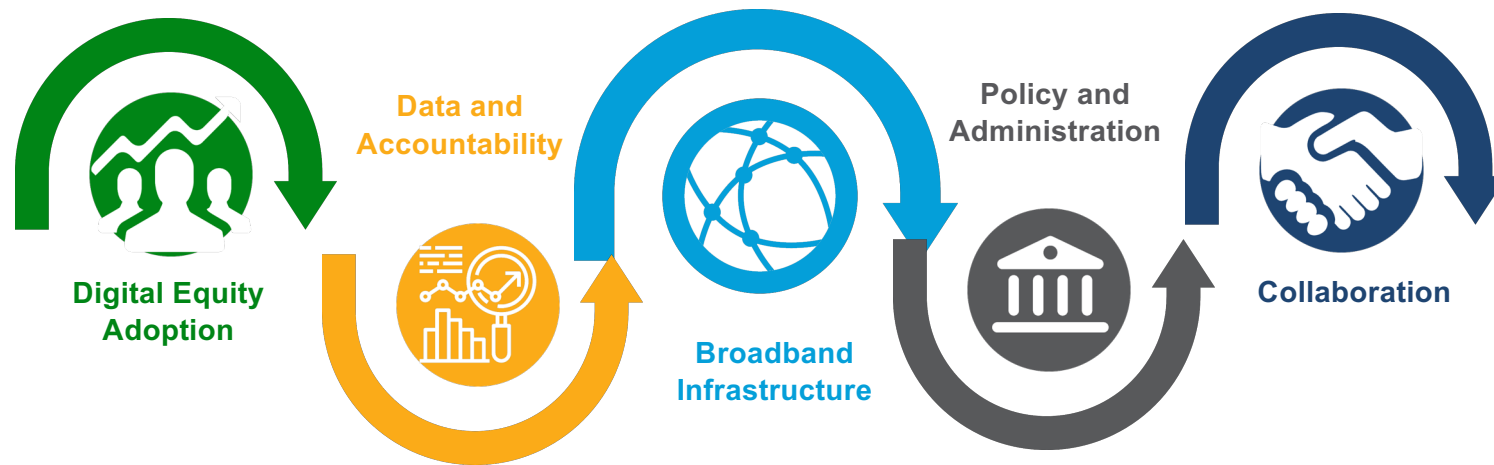
Partnering with SANDAG helps Cisco deliver on its commitment to *power an inclusive future* where everyone has access to the internet

# Community Success Roadmap Project Leadership Team



# Turning the Strategy into an Action Plan

- The partnership with Cisco Systems helped to codevelop a roadmap to streamline the deployment of broadband
- Cisco Systems conducted 60+ stakeholder interviews with over 40 regional, state, and federal organizations



# Cisco Systems Community Success Roadmap

Community Success Roadmap available in Appendix F of the Regional Digital Equity Strategy and Action Plan



# Actions Underway to Expand **Access**

- Encourage member agency adoption of digital divide resolution
- Coordinate with the State on statewide open-access middle-mile priority locations in SD County
- Complete a Digital Infrastructure and Broadband Master Plan
- Develop a dig once policy and develop regional fiber sharing agreement
- Track and participate in federal and state broadband legislation and rulemakings
- Conduct a regional economic analysis on the impacts of universal broadband
- Conduct a joint procurement with SCAG to prequalify internet service provider partners for future grants and dig once projects
- Convene Digital Infrastructure Technical Taskforce
- Actively pursue broadband infrastructure funding for the region

# Actions Underway to Increase *Adoption*

- Continue convening community-based organizations (CBOs), public housing, public health, libraries, and education organizations to advance digital equity
- Conduct regional survey of household broadband adoption
- Create a regional portal for digital equity data and resources
- Track and participate in federal and state broadband legislation and rulemakings
- Promote the FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program
- Coordinate with 211 to cross-promote information
- Donate retired technology assets to organizations that refurbish and distribute them to communities in need
- Advocate for sustainable funding for digital equity programming

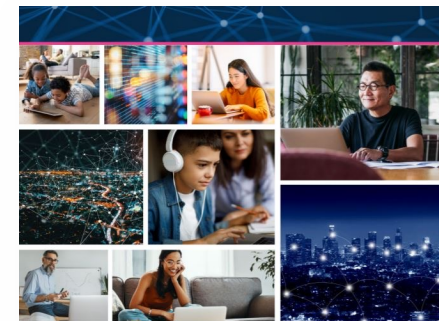
Learn more

## Regional Digital Equity Strategy and Action Plan

[www.sandag.org/digitalequity](http://www.sandag.org/digitalequity)

## Digital Divide Story Map

[www.sandag.org/digitaldividedata](http://www.sandag.org/digitaldividedata)



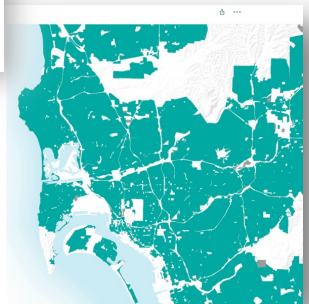
### Regional Digital Equity Strategy and Action Plan

December 2021  
San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG)

SANDAG

### The Digital Divide in the San Diego Region

San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG)



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-  Email: [krystal.ayala@sandag.org](mailto:krystal.ayala@sandag.org)

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