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# Utility Week 2024

**TxDOT Broadband Program Updates**

**Wednesday, December 4, 2024**

**Track Rm 2, Session 2**



April 18, 2025

## Presenter: Cristy Burch



Cristy Burch serves as the Broadband Coordinator for the new Texas Department of Transportation Broadband Program. Cristy has worked within TxDOT's IT Division for the past 2 years and has over 18 years of total state service, specializing in process improvement and technology strategy development. A resident of Menard, TX, she understands the impact of affordable and reliable rural broadband. Cristy regularly volunteers her time to assist local non-profits and county government officials when navigating broadband planning and grant opportunities.

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# Broadband Program Strategies | Connect. Learn. Build.



## Provide Access to ROW

Right of way shall be open via utility permit to allow access for broadband providers, and to ensure no single company has preferred access.



## Maximize Resource Sharing

“Dig Once” by installing conduit duct banks during compatible highway construction projects and expand capacity by permitting or leasing conduit and fiber.



## Assist Statewide Broadband Initiatives

Support the state’s effort to expand broadband infrastructure to bridge the digital divide across Texas.



## Foster TxDOT Broadband Capacity

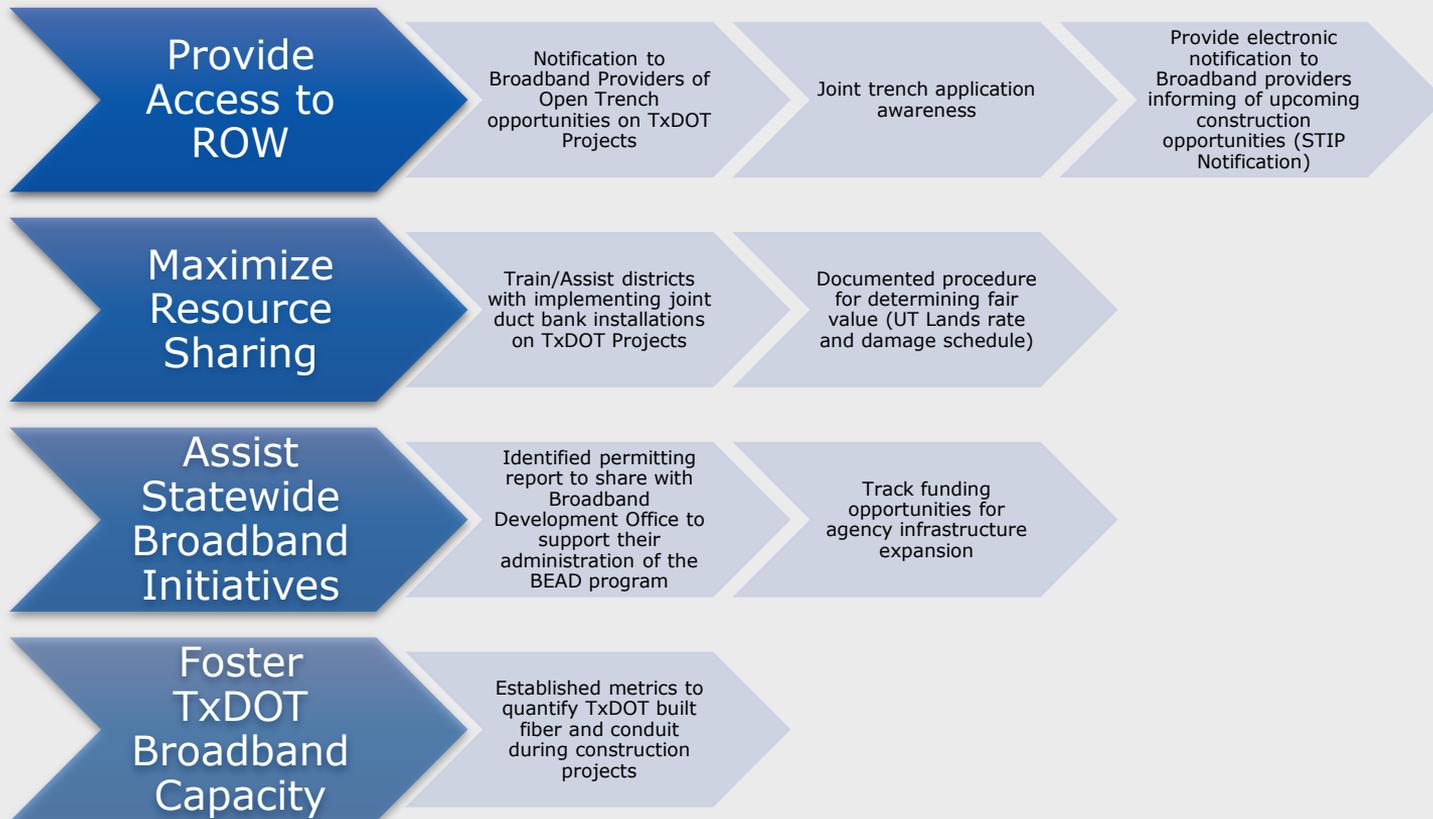
Facilitate the growth of TxDOT infrastructure to promote agency initiatives for workforce connectivity and intelligent transportation systems.



## Communication

Promote awareness of the TxDOT broadband program within the agency and with external public and private sectors.

## 2024 Accomplishments



## Big Bang Bandwidth Upgrades

**Status: GREEN**

Upgrade of bandwidth capacity to all TxDOT District Offices, Area Offices, Maintenance Offices, and Travel Information Centers

- 92% locations upgraded statewide
- All locations will be ordered through TEXAN cooperative contract
- <5% locations will receive a business class fiber or satellite connection, rather than dedicated fiber connection

➤ **Target Completion:** End Q2 2025



## El Paso Safety Rest Area Grant

**Status: GREEN**

\$6 million in Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund were awarded to the El Paso (ELP) district to provide public Wi-Fi access to six safety rest areas (SRA).

- IH 10 E Van Horn
- IH 10 Fabens
- IH 10 Fort Hancock

**Target Completion:** End Q4 2026



## Alternate Solutions - Satellite

**Status: GREEN**

TxDOT's Lee County Maintenance Office in Lincoln, TX will serve as the pilot site to install low earth orbit satellite to provide the site's broadband services. If successful, the solution will become available to other rural state locations that are unable to procure a fiber solution.

**Target Completion:** Q1 2025





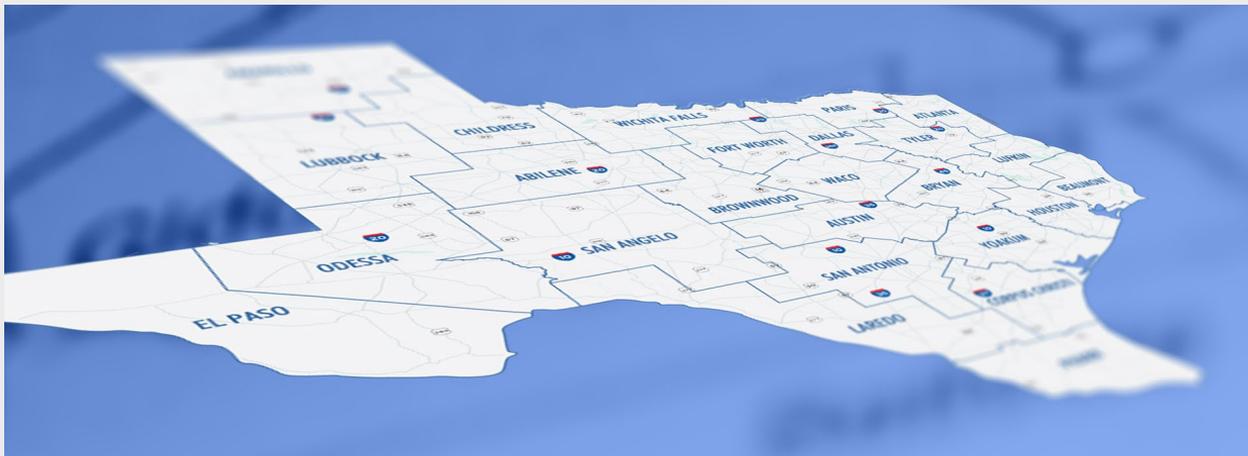
## Joint Duct Bank Specification Approval

- Joint Duct Statewide Spec 6526 was approved for use starting with July 2024 letting.
- Traffic Standard Design Sheets are under final internal review.
- Duct bank is built in conjunction with TxDOT construction projects.
- TxDOT discussions are underway regarding the process for occupying ducts.



## Fiber Data Mapping

- To better inform discussions for partnership opportunities, TxDOT is continuing to map TxDOT-owned fiber and conduit in a central database.
- When complete, we plan to publish routes to [txdot.gov](http://txdot.gov).

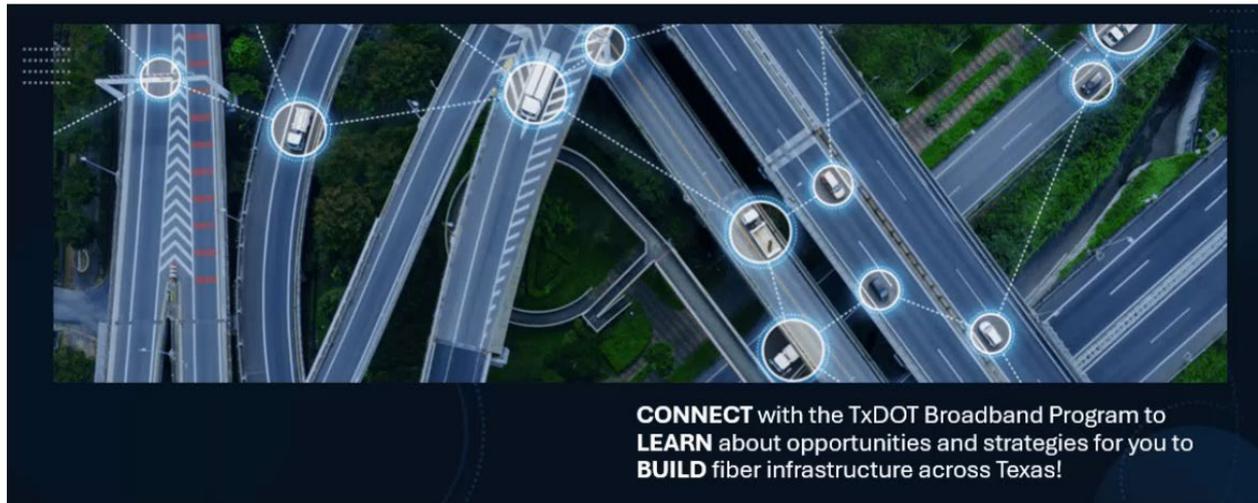




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## Broadband Program



Launched in 2023 and jointly sponsored by the Right of Way and Information Technology Divisions, the TxDOT Broadband Program is responsible for administering the agency's broadband program. To deploy infrastructure and reduce costs to Texas, collaboration between public and private partners is vital. TxDOT Broadband Program will:

## Register for notifications

- Visit <https://www.txdot.gov/about/programs/broadband-program.html>,
- Or Scan



**to register your company for TxDOT Broadband Program notifications.**

## Partnering with Internet Service Providers



Joint Duct



Utility Joint Bid



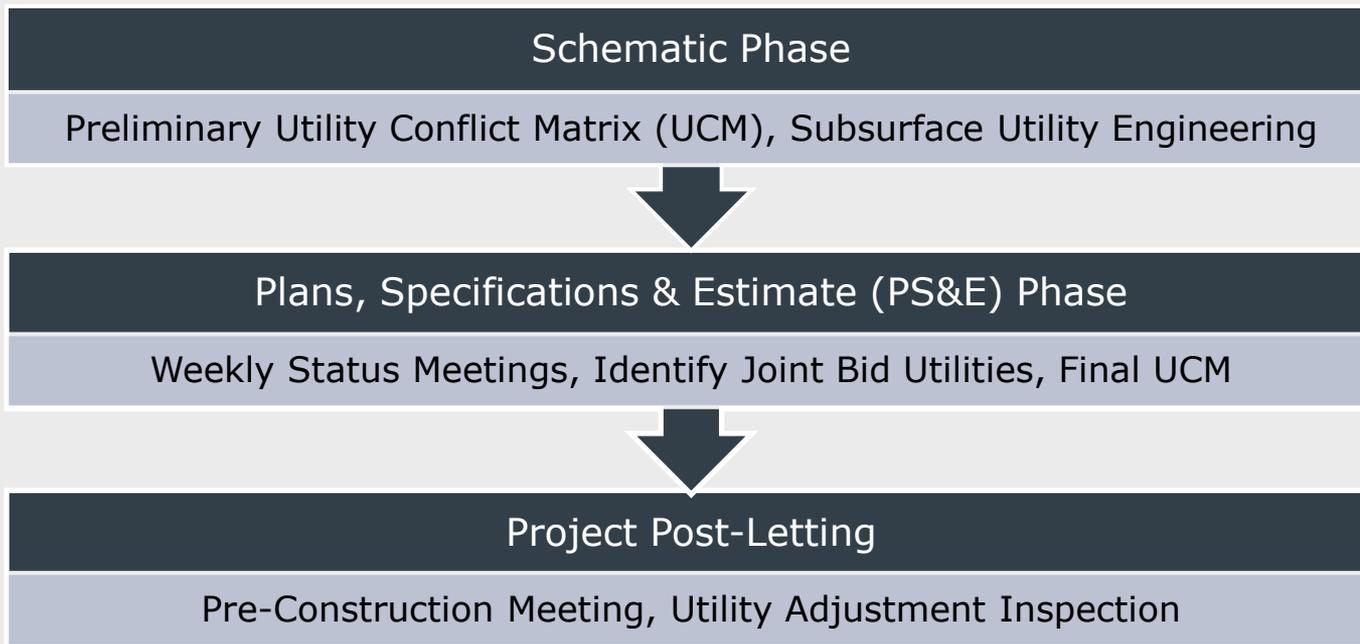
## Utility Joint Bid

**A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was developed in 1995 to partner with Utility Companies to Joint Bid.**

- **The effort must be a benefit to both parties.**
- **The adjustment of utility facilities is included in the proposed construction contract.**
- **Utility Companies inspect utility adjustment work.**



## Utility Coordination





## Joint Bid Considerations:





## Advantages



Under TxDOT  
Control



Minimize impact  
to traveling  
public



Minimize project  
delays





## Challenges



Bids may be higher than the estimated cost



Utility Inspection Coordination

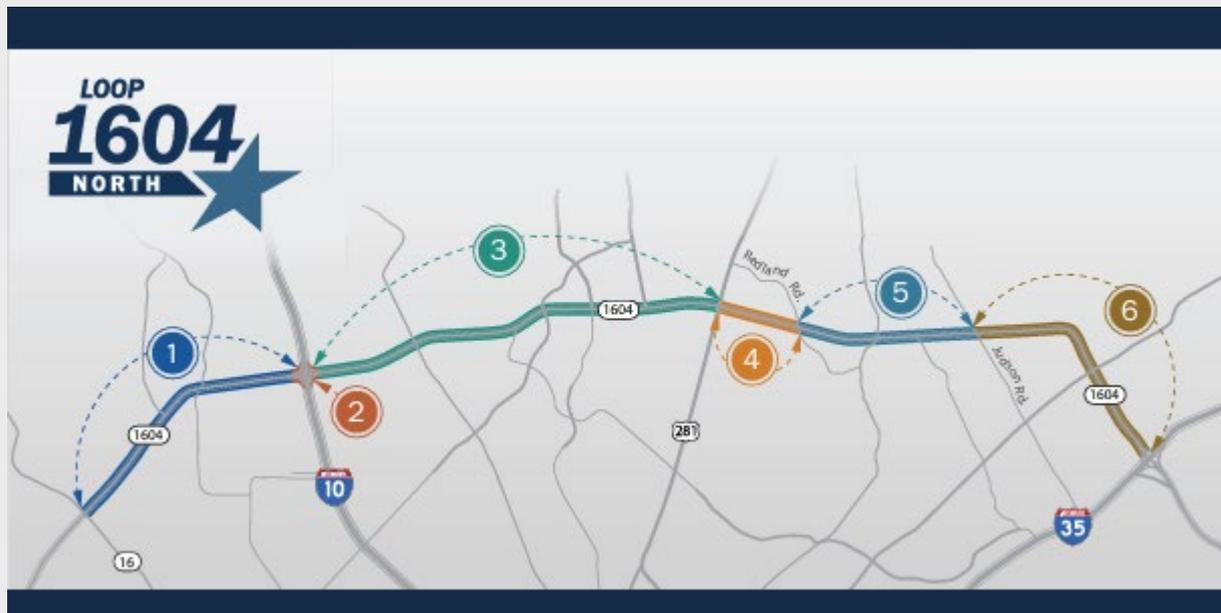


Utility is responsible for cost related to Change Orders





# Project Use Case: Loop 1604 & IH 10 Interchange Project



Slide credit: Monica Perez, Plan Review & Utility Section, San Antonio District



## Loop 1604 & IH 10 Interchange Project

### Project Description

- Construct Direct Connectors (Five-Level Interchange)

### Construction Cost

- Estimated: \$463M

### Project Construction

- Work Begin Date: Summer 2022
- Estimated Completion: Fall 2027

### Utilities

- 14 total; 4 Joint Bid Agreements



## Joint Bid Lessons Learned



Bids for utility work came in higher than estimated cost



Coordination with Utility Inspector



Changer Order negotiations

## Other opportunities for partnership

- Investigating options for:
  - utilizing on-call contracts for fiber/conduit work orders
  - partnering with private industry on grant opportunities



## Broadband Program Forecast for 2025



Publish TxDOT fiber map (accurate to control section)

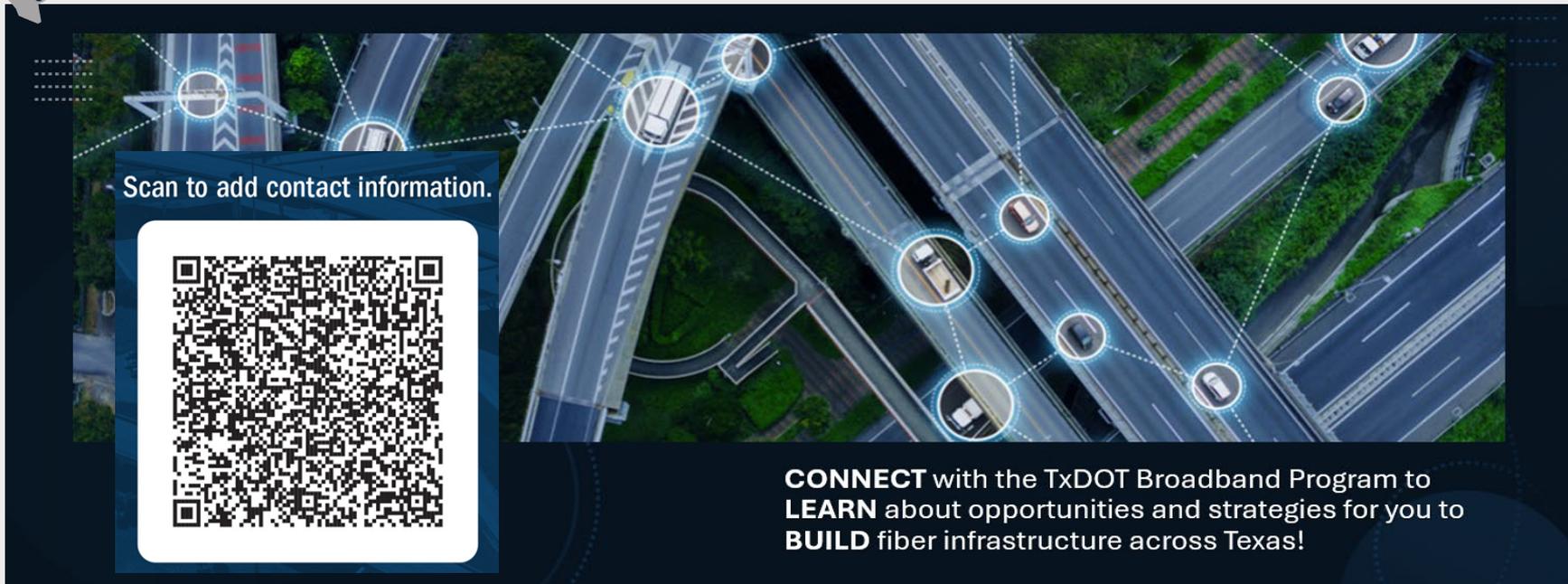


Explore opportunities for regional broadband program outreach to internet service providers



Launch internal Broadband Community of Practice

 **Connect with us!**



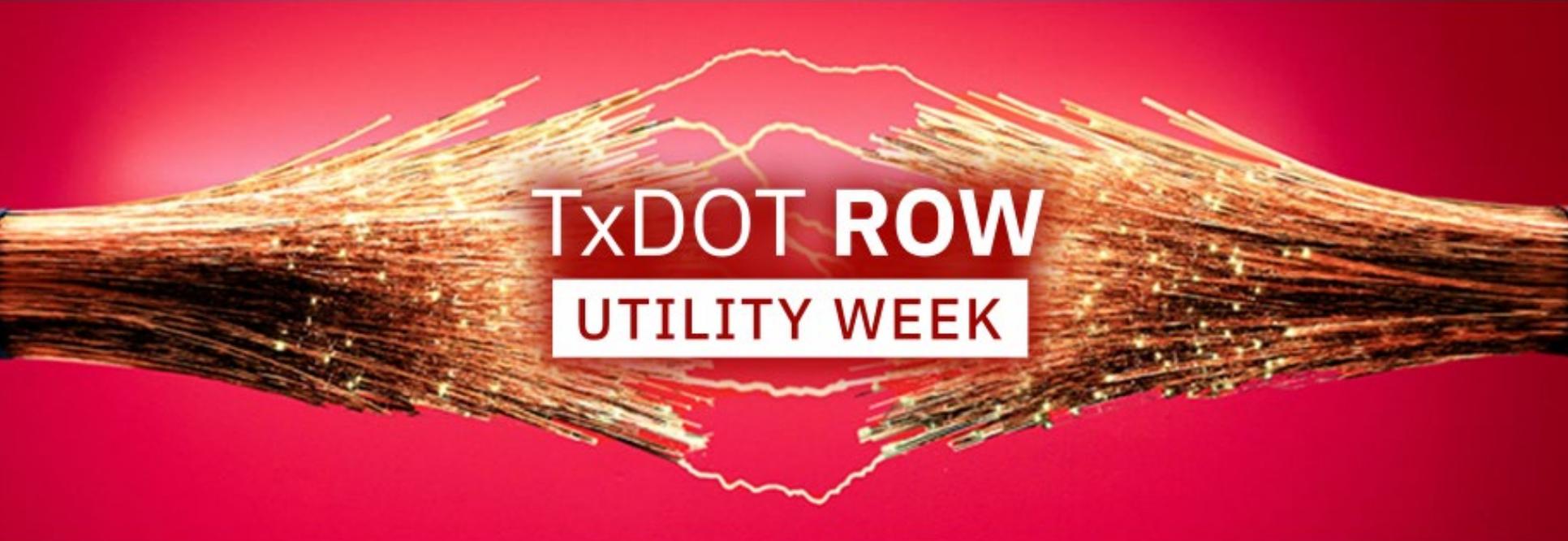
Scan to add contact information.



**CONNECT** with the TxDOT Broadband Program to **LEARN** about opportunities and strategies for you to **BUILD** fiber infrastructure across Texas!

**Cristy Burch**  
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**TxDOT ROW**  
**UTILITY WEEK**

*Partners in Coordination*

**Networking Break**



April 18, 2025



# Utility Week 2024

Broadband Coordination Q&A  
Wednesday, December 4, 2024  
Track 2, Session 3



April 18, 2025

*Thank You!*