

### 3 Dallas is served by ubiquitous cable and DSL, and some fixed wireless, but significant broadband investment gaps remain

An analysis of the Dallas broadband market finds the area has extensive infrastructure but that service gaps persist.

CTC's market assessment process involved data collection and analysis of where fiber, cable, DSL, and fixed wireless internet services exist, what service offerings and pricing are available to consumers, and how those relate to demographic patterns. CTC used the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Form 477 data to analyze such services in the City of Dallas and Dallas Independent School District (DISD) territory.

Form 477 data, reported by ISPs biannually, are known to overstate actual broadband availability. The data are presented at the census block level, and the FCC considers a census block served by broadband if even one of the premises in the block could be served. The data thus tend to overestimate service availability, particularly in less populated areas where one census block may cover many square miles. Despite these flaws, Form 477 represents the most comprehensive national dataset for broadband availability and tends to be more accurate in urban than rural areas.

In addition, CTC researched websites of broadband providers operating in the Dallas market area and engaged in online phone conversations with representatives of some internet service providers in order to collect market data on residential broadband pricing, availability, and level of competition in the area.

Leaving aside satellite and mobile providers—which do not provide consistent or adequate residential broadband speeds or service quality—four primary fixed broadband providers serve the Dallas and DISD district:

**Charter**, the dominant cable provider, serves most of the City and DISD territory.

**Suddenlink** also provides cable service in a smaller southeastern area, including in the portion of the DISD district that extends past the City's boundaries.

**AT&T** is the dominant DSL provider and delivers service within most of the City and DISD boundaries. In addition, AT&T is the primary fiber provider, and claims to serve large swaths of the area, especially toward the northeast and southwest.

**Rise Broadband**, the only fixed wireless provider operating in the Dallas market, reportedly served the western and southeastern parts of the City and DISD territory.

In addition, **DISD** itself delivers internet access on a pilot basis in parts of the City.

### 3.1 Analysis of fixed broadband service providers

We reviewed prices and service plans offered by Charter, Suddenlink, AT&T, and Rise Broadband. This research was conducted in the spring of 2021; prices and plans are subject to change. We randomly selected residential addresses in respective providers’ service areas to determine available service and advertised pricing.

#### 3.1.1 Fiber availability and pricing

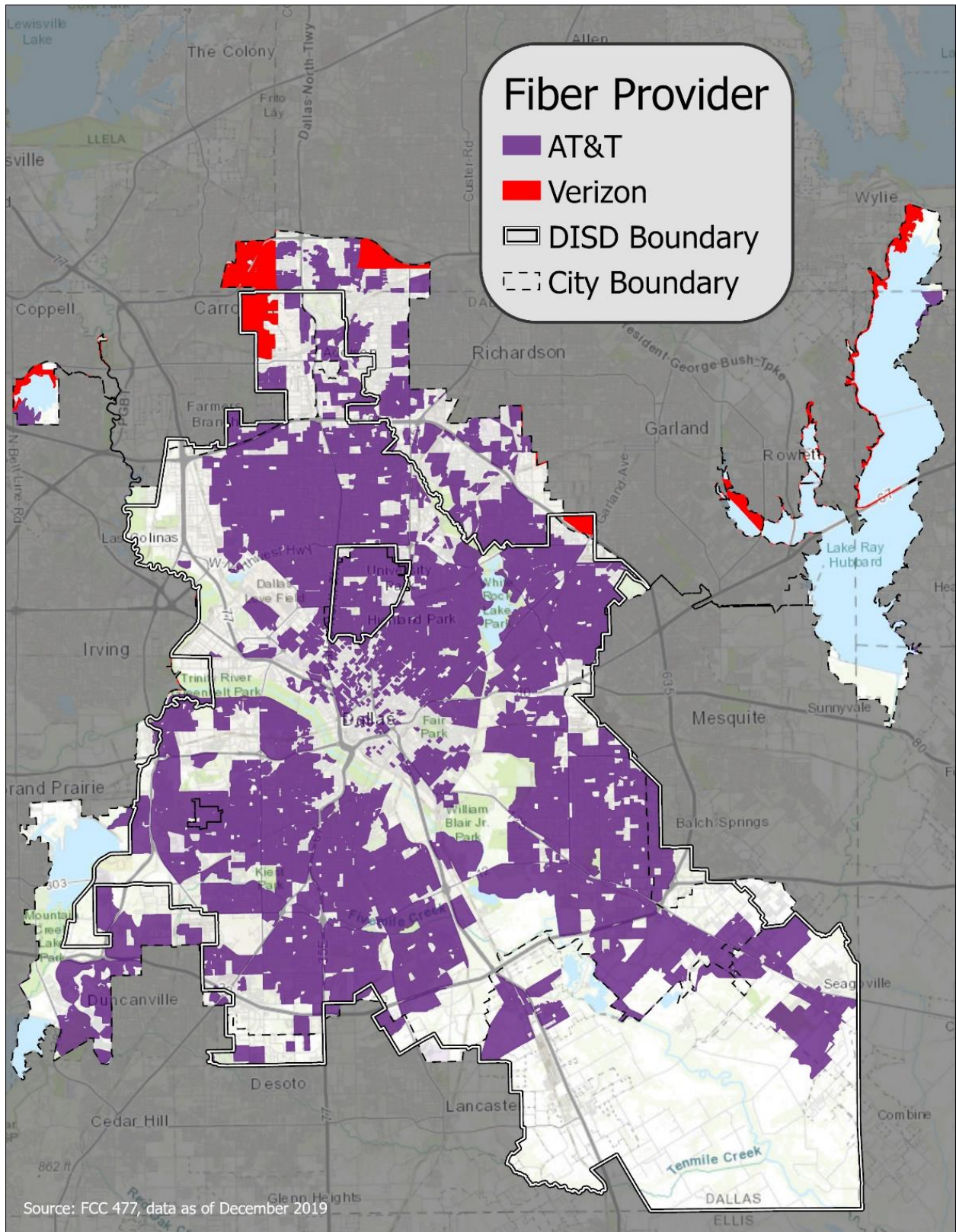
The data show that AT&T is the primary fiber provider operating in the market. AT&T reports to offer fiber service throughout much of the northeast and southwest regions. Additionally, the southeast pocket of the DISD territory that is beyond the City’s boundaries is almost entirely unserved by AT&T fiber. Verizon reported that they offer fiber service in scattered pockets, mostly in the northern part of the City and DISD district. Figure 7 (below) illustrates where fiber providers report service.

AT&T was found to offer three fiber services. Each package included a promotional price that increased by \$20 after a 12-month period. Table 8 summarizes the services offered.

**Table 8: Fiber Services Offered by AT&T in the Dallas Market**

Service	Advertised Download/Upload Speeds	Monthly Price (non-promotional)	Notes
Internet 100	100/100 Mbps	\$35 for first 12 months, then \$55	Equipment is additional \$10/month
Internet 300	300/300 Mbps	\$45 for first 12 months, then \$65	Equipment is additional \$10/month
Internet 1000	1/1 Gbps	\$60 for first 12 months, then \$80	Equipment is additional \$10/month

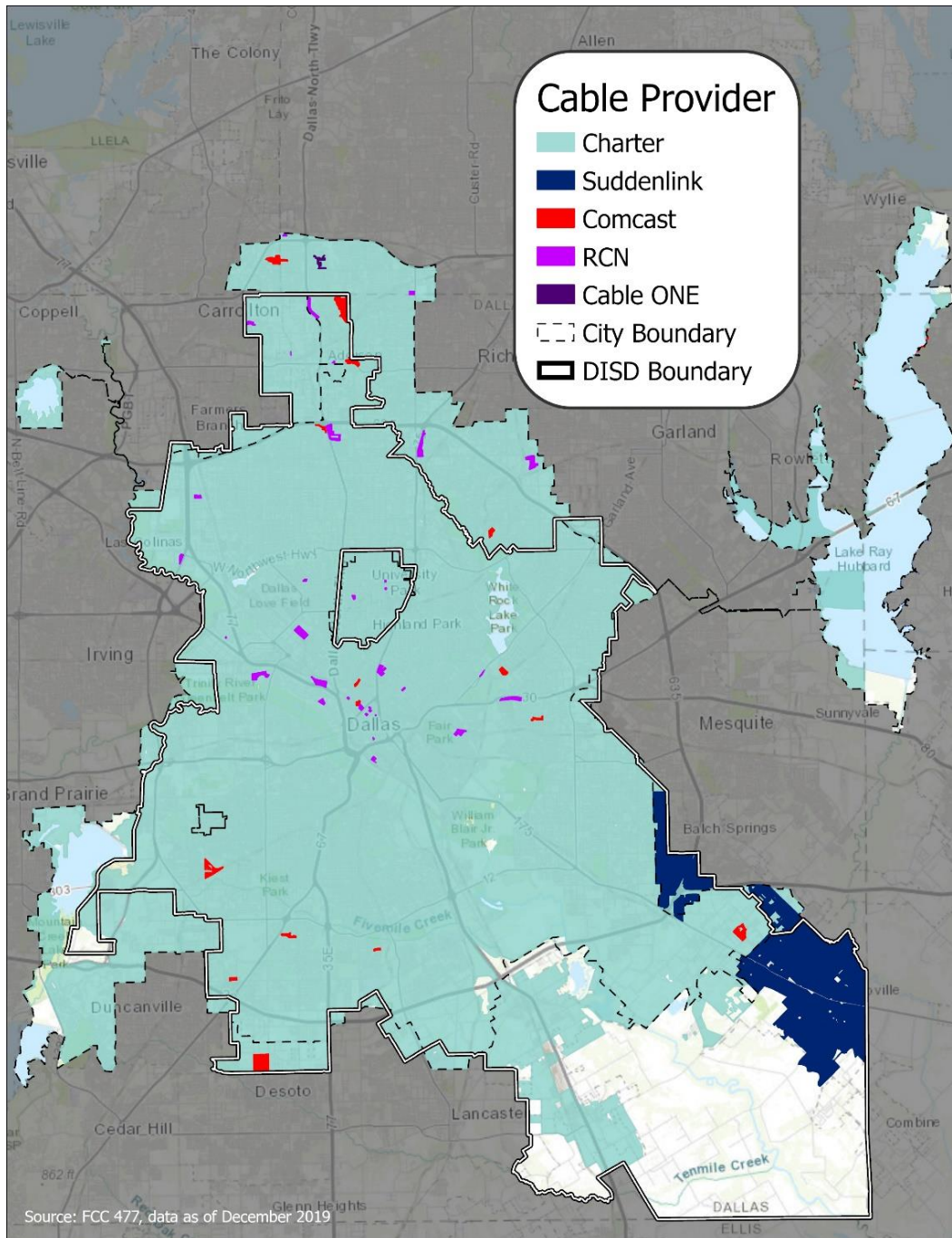
Figure 7: Fiber Providers Within the City and DISD Boundaries



### 3.1.2 Cable availability and pricing

Charter, the dominant cable provider in the Dallas area, reported covering nearly the entire City and much of DISD's boundaries. Suddenlink reported service in southeast regions of the City and DISD's boundaries. Comcast, RCN, and Cable ONE claimed to offer service in scattered pockets, but at such insignificant scales that we did not include them in our analysis. Figure 8 depicts where each cable provider reports residential service within the City and DISD boundaries.

Figure 8: Cable Providers Within the City and DISD Boundaries



Charter offered four plans, including a low-cost plan, Spectrum Internet Assist, for eligible households. Table 9 summarizes the services offered. Spectrum Internet Assist is available to households in which a member is a recipient of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the Community Eligibility Provision of the NSLP, or Supplemental Security Income. Households currently subscribed to Charter service are not eligible to switch to the Internet Assist program.<sup>16</sup>

**Table 9: Cable Services Offered by Charter in the Dallas Market**

Service	Advertised Download/Upload Speeds	Monthly Price (non-promotional)	Notes
Spectrum Internet Assist	30/3 Mbps	\$17.99	Does not include installation cost; additional \$5/month for in-home Wi-Fi
Spectrum Internet 50	50/5 Mbps	\$29.99 for first 24 months, then \$69.99	Does not include installation cost; additional \$5/month for in-home Wi-Fi
Spectrum Internet Ultra	400/20 Mbps	\$49.99 for first 24 months, then \$94.99	Does not include installation cost; additional \$5/month for in-home Wi-Fi
Spectrum Internet Gig	940/35 Mbps	\$109.99 for first 24 months, then \$154.99	Does not include installation cost; in-home Wi-Fi included

Suddenlink offered three internet packages (Table 10).

**Table 10: Cable Services Offered by Suddenlink in the Dallas Market**

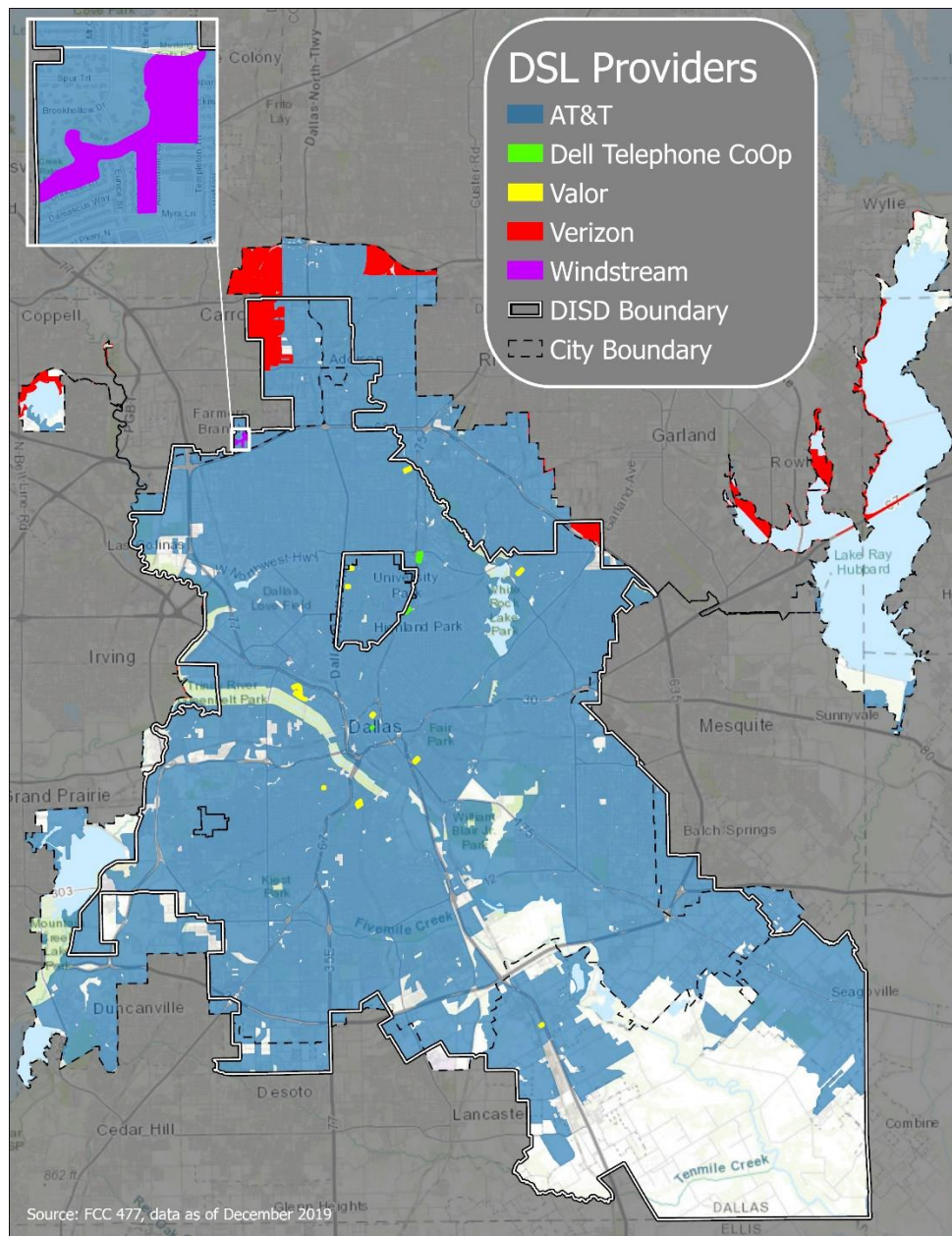
Service	Advertised Download/Upload Speeds	Monthly Price (non-promotional)	Notes
Internet 100	100/10 Mbps	\$35	Equipment is additional \$10/month
Internet 400	400/20 Mbps	\$40	Equipment is additional \$10/month
Internet 1 Gig	940/50 Mbps	\$50	Equipment is additional \$10/month

<sup>16</sup> Spectrum Internet Assist, Charter Communications, accessed April 23, 2021, <https://www.spectrum.com/internet/spectrum-internet-assist>

### 3.1.3 DSL availability and pricing

The data showed that AT&T is the primary DSL provider in the Dallas area, with service reported throughout much of the City and DISD territory. Verizon reported offering DSL service in regions in the northern part of the City and DISD territory, in largely the same areas it reported offering fiber service. In addition, Dell Telephone Co-Op, Valor, and Windstream each reported service in very limited pockets, but at such insignificant scales that we did not include these providers in our analysis. Figure 9 illustrates where DSL providers offer residential service in the Dallas territory.

Figure 9: DSL Providers Within the City and DISD Boundaries



In the Dallas area, AT&T is clearly the dominant DSL provider. But the speed offerings vary widely depending on the level of investment AT&T has made. From a business standpoint, AT&T (like other network operators) presumably invests in improving its DSL networks where it can make a business case to do so based on development density and the number of potential customers it can obtain or retain after increasing speeds. These business imperatives often mean that less-dense and lower-income areas are left with inferior speeds. As in other cities, AT&T has not uniformly upgraded its network in the Dallas area. As a consequence of this business practice, Dallas-area residents who use AT&T are not uniformly accessing the minimal broadband speeds needed to serve the demands of all schoolwork and remote work.

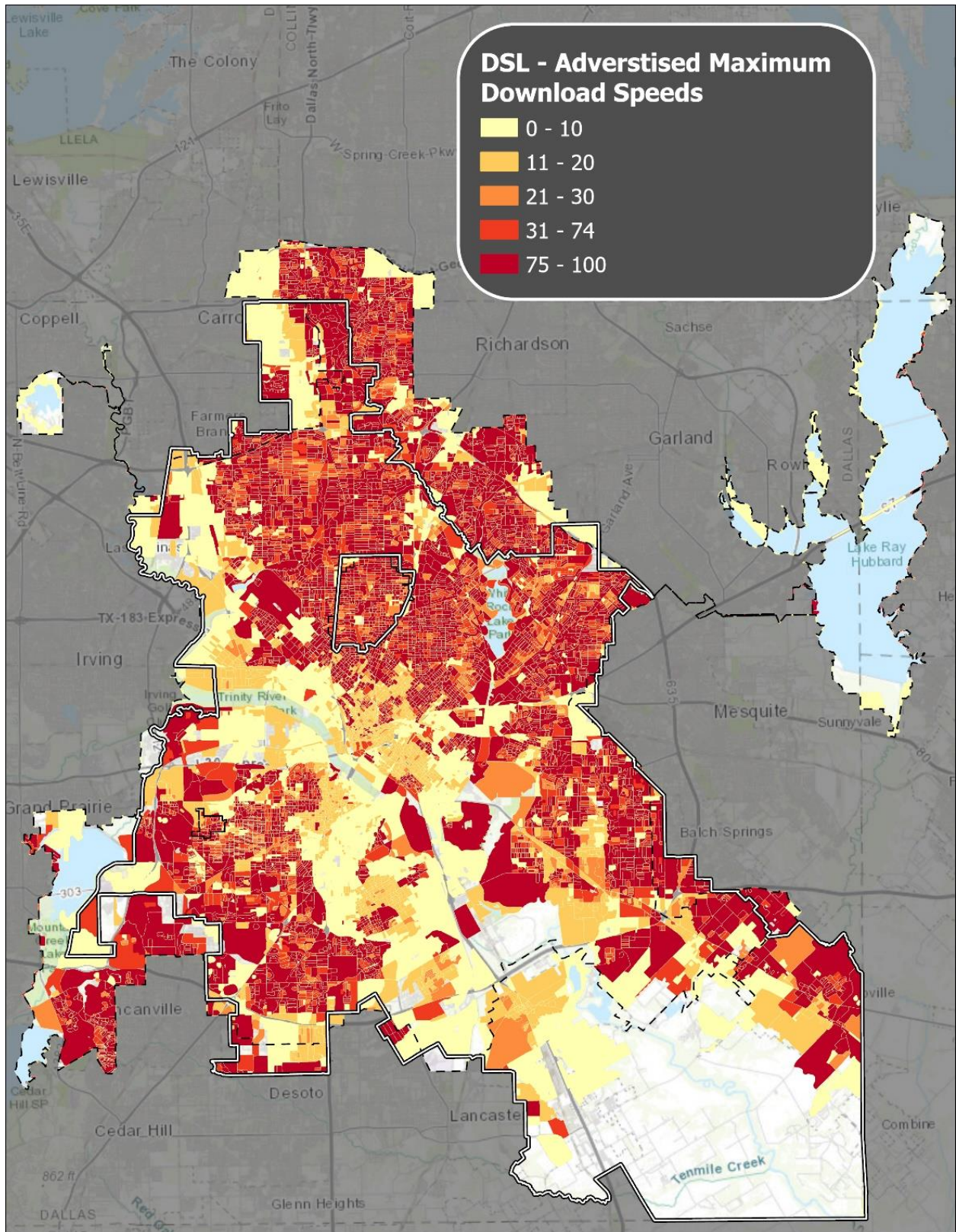
Only one option for AT&T Internet is available at each address, and that service represents the highest DSL speed that AT&T reports to offer at that location. The structure of this model means that those who live in areas of Dallas with slower reported DSL speeds would pay the same amount for the service as others receiving a higher speed elsewhere. Areas of the City with higher levels of poverty are also the areas where the DSL speeds are lower—but residents using this service still have to pay the same price. The packages represented in Table 11 are based on AT&T’s information about AT&T Internet services available nationally. Through our research, we found the national prices to be consistent with what is offered in the Dallas market.

**Table 11: DSL Services Offered by AT&T Nationally**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Advertised Download/Upload Speeds</b>	<b>Monthly Price (non-promotional)</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Internet 10	10/1 Mbps	\$45 for first 12 months, then \$55	Equipment is additional \$10/month
Internet 18	18/1 Mbps	\$45 for first 12 months, then \$55	Equipment is additional \$10/month
Internet 25	25/2 Mbps	\$45 for first 12 months, then \$55	Equipment is additional \$10/month
Internet 50	50/10 Mbps	\$45 for first 12 months, then \$55	Equipment is additional \$10/month
Internet 100	100/20 Mbps	\$45 for first 12 months, then \$55	Equipment is additional \$10/month

Figure 10 shows the maximum reported download speeds by DSL providers in the Dallas market area. As a practical matter, this map largely depicts AT&T DSL service, and shows that according to Form 477 data, broadband or better DSL service is very widely available in Dallas from AT&T.

Figure 10: Maximum Reported DSL Download Speed (Mbps) Within the City and DISD Boundaries

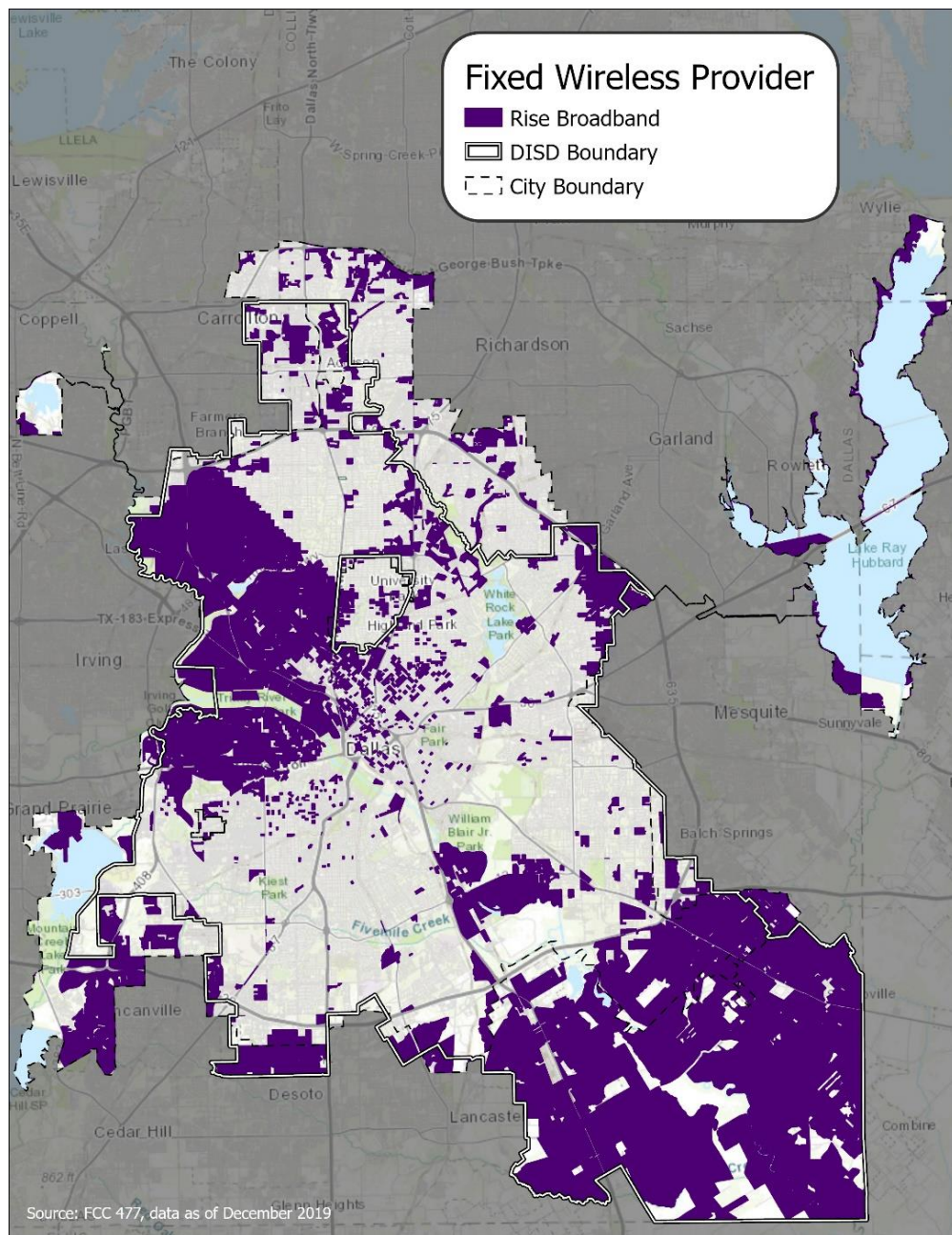




### 3.1.4 Fixed wireless availability and pricing

Rise Broadband was found to be the only fixed wireless provider offering services in the Dallas market. Rise reports service in areas scattered throughout the market, with particular emphasis on the western and southeastern areas (Figure 11). Two other fixed wireless providers, Nextlink Residential and WiFires, reported on Form 477 that they offer service in some parts of Dallas, but telephone interviews with service representatives revealed that no such service was actually available.

Figure 11: Fixed Wireless Providers Within the City and DISD Boundaries



CTC found two plans that Rise Broadband offered. Each offered the same speeds, but one offered unlimited data while the other had a 250 GB monthly data cap. Table 12 summarizes the services offered.

**Table 12: Fixed Wireless Services Offered by Rise Broadband in the Dallas Market**

Service	Advertised Download/Upload Speeds	Monthly Price (non-promotional)	Notes
Internet	25/2.5 Mbps	\$45.99	Includes required equipment cost; free installation; 250 GB data allowance per month.
Internet with Unlimited Data	25/2.5 Mbps	\$70.94	Includes required equipment cost; free installation; unlimited data allowance.

### 3.2 Analysis of demographic patterns and network investment

CTC’s analysis found that investment in networks—specifically, fiber deployment or the upgrade of DSL networks to reach higher speeds—has not occurred consistently throughout the City and DISD market area. The areas that have seen less investment fall into two categories, which are illustrated in Figure 12 below:

1. Areas in which the maximum reported DSL download speed is 30 Mbps or lower, **and** where fiber service is not available. The only option for a wired internet service in these areas would be cable, or DSL operating at download speeds of 30 Mbps or less.
2. Areas in which fixed wireless is the only fixed service reported to be available. In other words, areas in which there is no option for a wired service.

This figure is based on structures in these zones (not population) but we estimate that more than 210,000 people live in the DSL-only areas (teal) and that about 5,000 people live in the areas served only by fixed wireless service (red).