



Date: February 9, 2024
To: Municipal Light Board: Brian Foulds (Chair), Alice Kaufman, Warren Leon, John Dalton, and Bianca Taylor
From: Jason Bulger, CTO, Interim CMLP Director
Subject: Agenda for Virtual Light Board Meeting **February 14, 2024, 7:30 A.M.** (Zoom link on page 2)

- 7:30 AM 1. **Call to Order**
- 7:30 AM 2. **Meetings and Minutes** 5 Minutes Chair
 March 13, 2024, March 27, 2024, April 10, 2024, May 8, 2024, June 12, 2024, July 10, 2024, August 14, 2024, September 11, 2024, October 9, 2024, November 13, 2024, & December 11, 2024.
 February 28, 2024 – Purchased Power Portfolio Public Forum (5pm-7pm)
- 7:35 AM 3. **Chairs Update** 5 Minutes Chair
- 7:40 AM 4. **Directors Update** 10 Minutes Director Information
- 7:50 AM 5. **Broadband Update** 5 Minutes Director Information
- 7:55 AM 6. **Energy New England (ENE) Board Position** 5 Minutes Director Discussion/Vote
Background: Concord has an ownership stake in Energy New England (ENE) and as such has Board position currently vacant after the departure of the previous Director.
Purpose: To make a nomination and take a vote to appoint the Interim Director of the Light Plant to the ENE Board.
- 8:00 AM 7. **Middle School Solar Update** 5 Minutes Ms. Scott Information
Background Town Meeting voted to support an initiative to have CMLP install solar panels and a battery at the new Middle School.
Purpose: Update Board members on recent progress developments.
- 8:05 AM 8. **Director Transition Update** 10 Minutes Chair Information
Background: In early January of 2024, the Director of the Light Plant left, and currently there is an Interim Director in place.
Purpose: The Interim Director will provide updates on the transition plan and introduce a limited status part-time employee currently working to support operations.
- 8:15 AM 9. **Solar Task Force Warrant Article Presentation** 30 Minutes Ms. Scott Discussion
Background: In June 2023, a Town meeting-authorized task force began prioritizing a list of suitable sites for solar installations on municipally owned land. The STF is sponsoring a warrant article for 2024 Town meeting to authorize the Light Plant to spend up to \$9.2M to install utility scale solar systems with battery storage at the landfill and CCHS campus.
Purpose: To determine if there is Light Board support for the warrant article.
- 8:45 AM 10. **Feasibility Funding for Solar Task Force sites Under Consideration** 10 Minutes Chair Discussion/Vote
Background: The STF wants CMLP to perform feasibility studies for the potential solar installations on the slope of the landfill and at the CCHS campus.
Purpose: To obtain Light Board approval to expend CMLP funds for the feasibility studies.



8:55 AM 11. **CMLP Operations and Projects Updates** 15 Minutes Director Information
Background: Periodically the Light Plant staff wish to let the Board and the public know what projects occupy their time.
Purpose: To provide an update on operations and projects in process.

9:10 AM 12. **Liaison & Public Comments** 5 Minutes Chair

9:15AM 13. **Adjourn**

Distribution: Select Board (1 copy)

Kerry Lafleur

Carole Hilton

Joe Repoff

Matt Cummings

Jan Aceti

Laura Scott

Chris Carmody

Eric Simms

Jason Bulger

Mary Hartman

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8945107455?pwd=MXQwSIZEbGRQeHUvZ3hHZ3VwQXUzQT09>

Meeting ID: 894 510 7455

Passcode: 4160

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,8945107455#,,,,*4160# US (Chicago)

+16468769923,,8945107455#,,,,*4160# US (New York)

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kbp7GGHZIa>

Link to view recordings of previous Light Board Meetings:

<https://www.youtube.com/@MinutemanMediaNetwork/search?query=Concord%20Light%20Board>

Link to view the Broadband Monthly Updates:

<https://www.concordma.gov/3148/Monthly-Updates>

Date: February 9, 2024
To: Light Board Members
From: Jason Bulger, Interim Director of the Concord Municipal Light Plant
Subject: Director's Update February 2024

AMS project

- We have installed approximately 1,250 residential meters to date, or 15%, with the help of our electrical contractor. The installation work is going well despite the installations being weather dependent.
- Currently we are employing one two-person crew from the contractor in addition to our Metering Division and will be adding a second crew to assist us with installations within the next few weeks.
- We are also exploring other ideas for help with this project including leads from NEPPA and student interns from the area vocational high schools.
- CMLP's electrician has installed approximately 50 load control relays for customers who participate in our load control programs (roughly 420 customers) including water heaters and electric thermal storage heaters. We're finding some customers are no longer interested in participating; some homeowners may have changed, and the new homeowner is not aware they are participating; and a few devices not working.
- We are receiving several meter shipments including the CL 320 meters which are used for commercial customers and residential customers with large electrical loads.
- Twenty-three customers have opted out of receiving a new AMI meter.

Residential Assistance Renewals

- January is the annual renewal time for the customers on our Residential Assistance rate.
- The CSRs send out renewal letters to the customers currently enrolled requesting updated financial information and application. The CSRs also called or emailed customers twice to remind them to send in their application.
- We will continue to add customers back on reduced rates as we receive applications that are complete.
- Many customers have not responded to our outreach or submitted renewal applications this year, so will not continue to receive the preferential reduced rate.
- For 2024, we have 148 customers on residential assistance rates—122 electric customers and 26 water customers, a drop in the number of customers who applied for assistance this year as compared to last year.

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- By comparison, in 2023, we had 177 customers on residential assistance rates—149 electric customers and 28 water customers.

Accounts Receivable

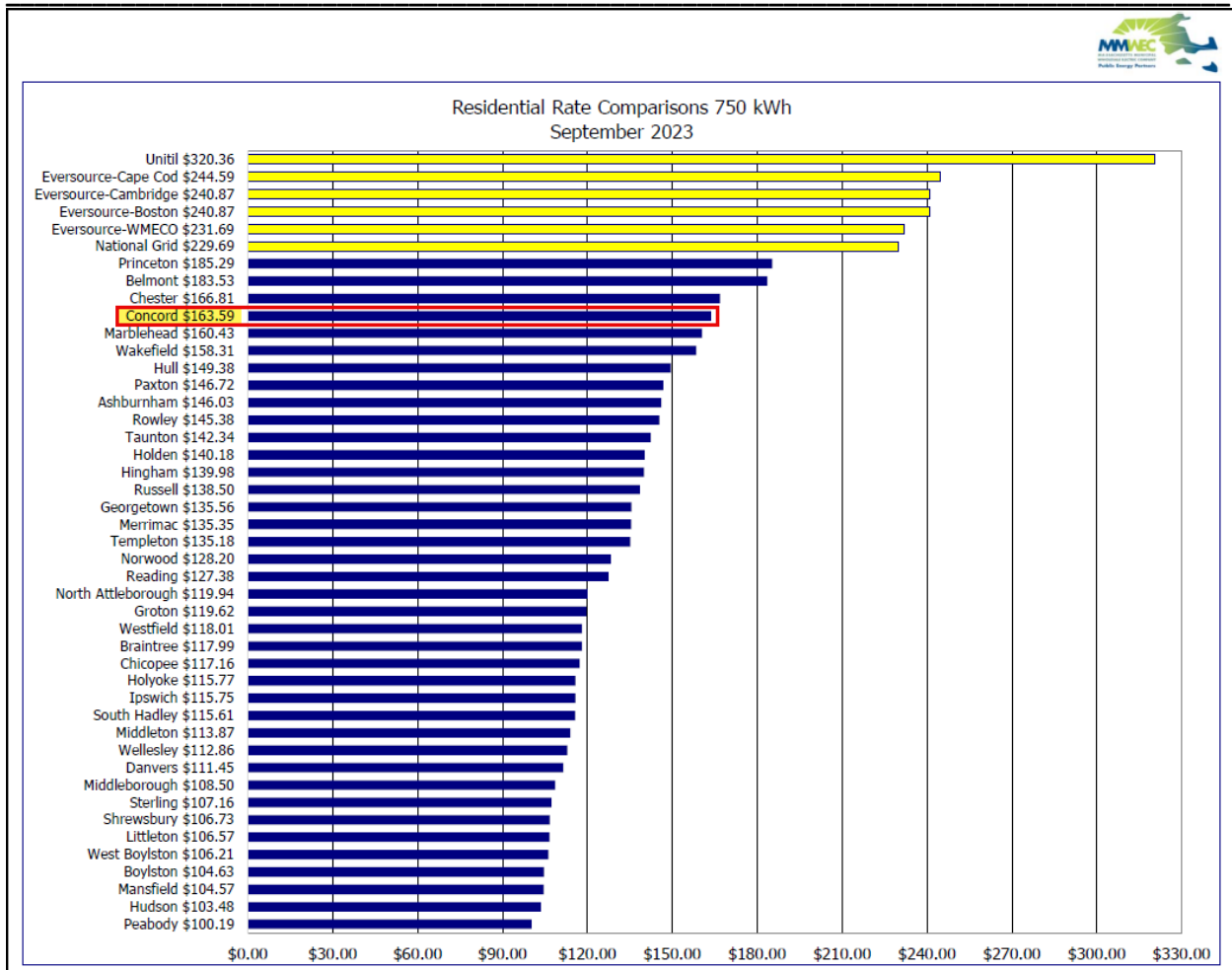
- Accounts Receivable for all service providers as of early February are consistent with previous years during the winter months with the exception of Water and Sewer being much higher than usual this month.
- The “Current” and “30-Day” categories will drop off with the next billing cycle; the “60-Day” and “90-Day” categories will decrease once the winter moratorium is lifted and the CSRs begin regular collections efforts again.
- March 15 is the official date for the winter moratorium on disconnections to be lifted per the DPU; however, based on winter weather conditions such as how cold it has been, how much snow is on the ground, etc., the date is usually extended until at least early April. The DPU usually announces any delays with the winter moratorium in early March.
- We are currently reviewing and updating the language on our past due notices and our process documents.

Donate Your Solar RECs to CMLP Program

- Program design details need to be finalized by the Light Board, but staff have been busy working on developing concepts based on the Board’s guidance to date.
- The Light Board’s suggestion was either a flat yearly or monthly payment to customers for their RECs; since the latter requires less intervention for our billing software, we proposed adopting the Board’s suggested \$9/month payment.
- Regardless of the amount the Board settles on, we have worked with NISC to setup a line item credit is created in the billing system.
- Data received from DOER is not “clean” so the comparison with NISC data is a manual, line-by-line comparison.
- Marketing with a direct mail flyer is being developed to be sent to those who qualify for the program (once approved by the Board).
- We will be prepared to outline the program at a future meeting to have the Board confirm the details of the program.

Power Supply and Rates

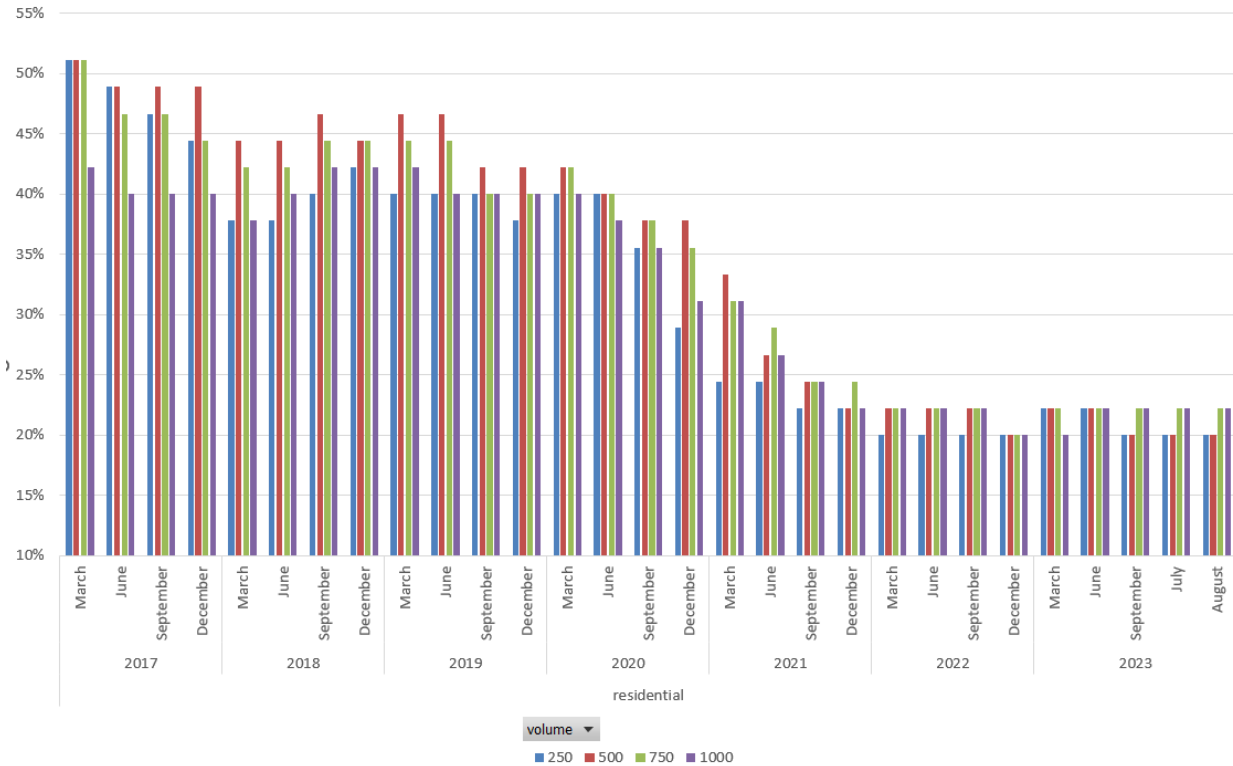
[MMWEC](#) published their Q3 2023 residential rate comparisons. CMLP is the 4th most expensive **municipal** utility out of 39. However a Concord user of 750 kWh per month is still paying 30% less than an Eversource customer (\$163.59 vs. \$240.87).



The chart above is a snapshot in time – where CMLP stood in September 2023. By contrast, the chart below shows how CMLP’s ranking has changed over the years. In 2017, 50% of MA utilities had more expensive residential rates than CMLP. In 2023, only 20% of MA utilities had residential rates that were more expensive than CMLP’s. Keep in mind CMLP’s power supply is 100% NCE while other utilities may have smaller percentages or may be 100% emitting. The effect of gradually increasing the REC collection can be seen over time.



CMLP Percentile Ranking in Massachusetts



Community Solar

We are working with the Solar Task Force on analysis and feasibility on some of their top contenders for municipal solar sites, including the CCHS campus and the landfill.

We continue to work on the solar project at the Concord Middle School. We are waiting for SMMA (the school’s designer and builder) to provide information so we can complete switchboard design, which will then allow Solar Design Associates (SDA) to complete their design. We are also working with the Planning division and Town Counsel on a waiver from setback requirements for some of the canopies, which encroach about 15 feet into the 40-foot setback.

Level III DC Fast Charger

The Level 3 DC Fast Charger at the Rideout parking lot is operational, and we wanted to provide the following updates on the progress:

- Signs have been ordered for the parking spaces.
- Crews will be adding the striping once weather conditions permit (needs to be warmer and dry).



- We are working with Flo on changing the rates of one of the chargers, which is still not showing up as Time-of-Use.
- We understand some are concerned about a lack of an NACS/Tesla-compatible charging plug. The grant we utilized for funding required a CHAdeMO and CCS connector, so that is what we installed. We need to keep the units in tact for one year, and at that time we can make modifications. At the end of a year, we plan on retrofitting some of the plugs to have NACS connectors. In the meantime, people may be able to use an [adapter](#), but you will need to verify that your vehicle is compatible with the adapter before purchasing.

CMLP Director Transition

In January, Director Dave Wood left CMLP to go to Wellesley. Chief Technology Officer Jason Bulger was named Interim Director, and the process has begun to find the next Director of the Light Plant.

Staff have been working to identify values, traits and experience of the next Director as well as making suggestions on the makeup of the screening panel. The position will likely be posted in the near future.



TOWN OF CONCORD MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

ELECTRIC | WATER | SEWER | TELECOMMUNICATIONS

January 2024 – Broadband Updates

Concord Broadband is pleased to share the following updates and information from the past month. Please do not hesitate to contact us at broadband@concordma.gov should you have any questions, concerns, or feedback.

Operations

Recruitment continues for a new Network Engineer. We continue to screen candidates after having our last recruitment fall through.

Our Technicians, Network Engineer, and Broadband Manager have been busy working on expanding the Town's use of cameras at key Concord Public Works locations. This involves physical infrastructure as well as networking setup and configuration.

We are working with Calix, the vendor that makes customer ONTs and our switches, to prepare upgrades to all equipment. There should be a very small impact on customers during the night – see inset for more information.

Measuring speed

Customers of any Internet Service Provider – Concord Broadband included – often wonder how exactly the speed is measured on their service and how it might be guaranteed. While we can't speak for how the other folks do it, we can tell you how we calculate this.

When a class of service is created in our equipment, we configure a speed that meets or exceeds the advertised number. In every case, the programmed number is a little higher than the advertised speed to ensure that we get that speed when we test a customer's location. If the speed advertised is 500/500, we may program it to be 520/520, for example.

Since several customers share the same fiber, and each fiber has a maximum speed possible, whenever we provision a new customer we do analysis, including a 90-day look-back on bandwidth used, to make sure that new and existing customers who share that fiber get the speeds promised. Allocating more promised speed to a group who will never likely see the speeds they are paying for is against our values as an organization.

When customers call concerned about their speeds, they are often on a wireless device. Unfortunately there are a few

Upcoming Maintenance

There is no maintenance currently scheduled, but we are planning on scheduling one for February or March. We will be targeting the Town website, News and Notices email subscribers and posting updates on the website below.

The purpose of the upcoming maintenance is to upgrade the firmware on all Broadband devices, which will impact service for 5-15 minutes (between 1-4am).

You can learn more about maintenance windows here:

<https://concordma.gov/3144/Broadband-Maintenance>

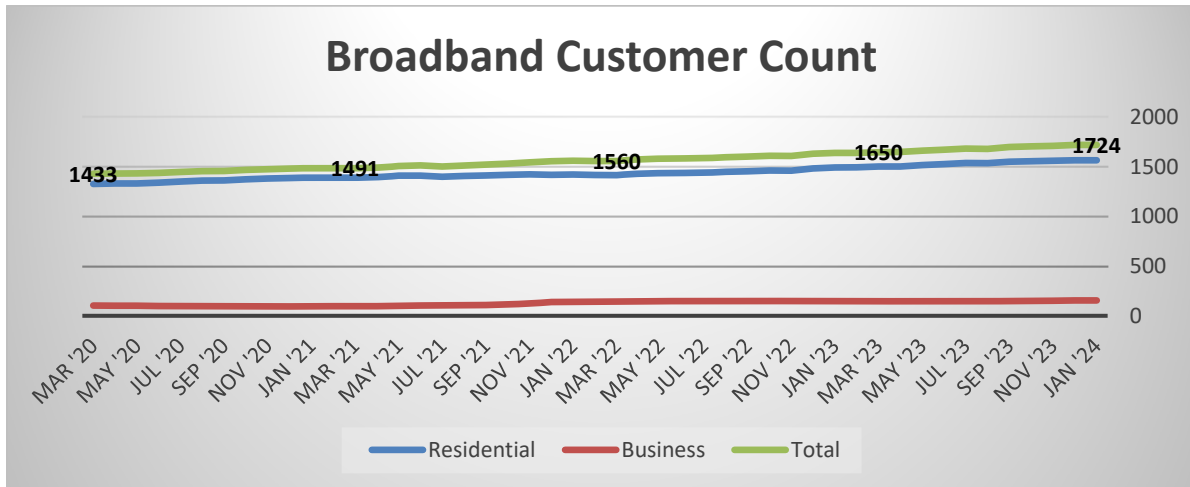
reasons why a wireless device might not get the advertised speeds, like:

- A device that has a modem incapable of providing the advertised speed
- Having the device too far from the router or access point.
- Having too many other devices pulling so much data that it is impacting the test device

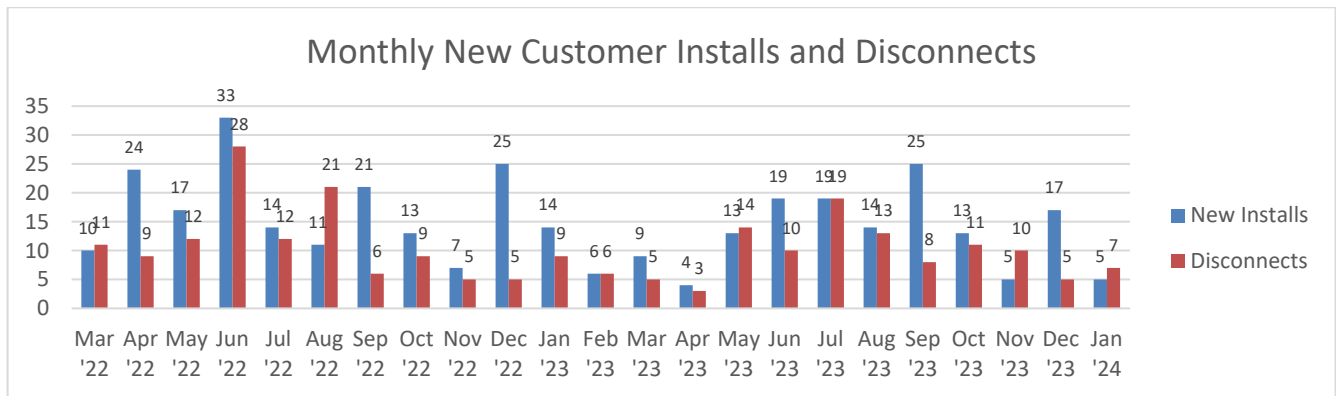
When you reach out to our call center, they will walk you through basic troubleshooting. It's always best to find a wired connection to rule out some of the issues listed above for wireless connections.

Whenever customers do not get the advertised speed, we work with them to ensure that their service is working properly and they can get the speeds they pay for.

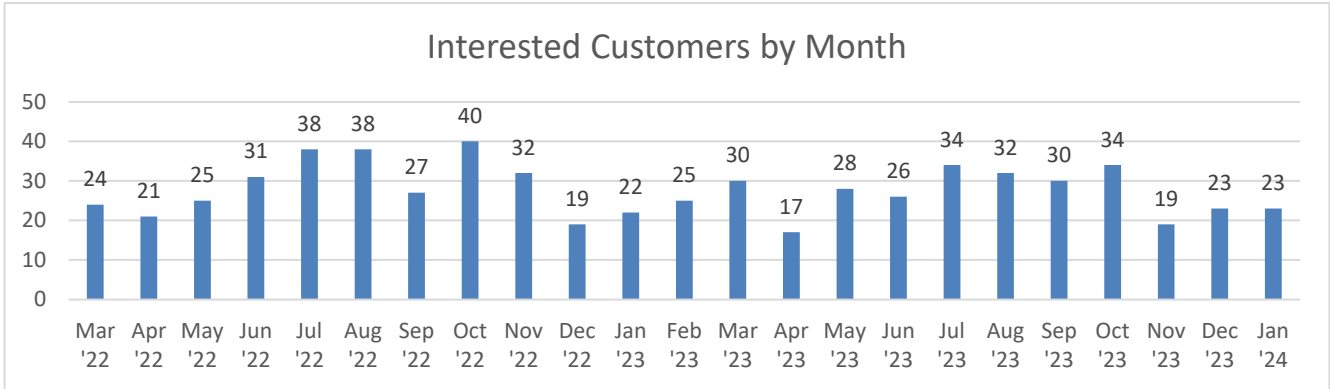
Monthly Metrics and Business Data



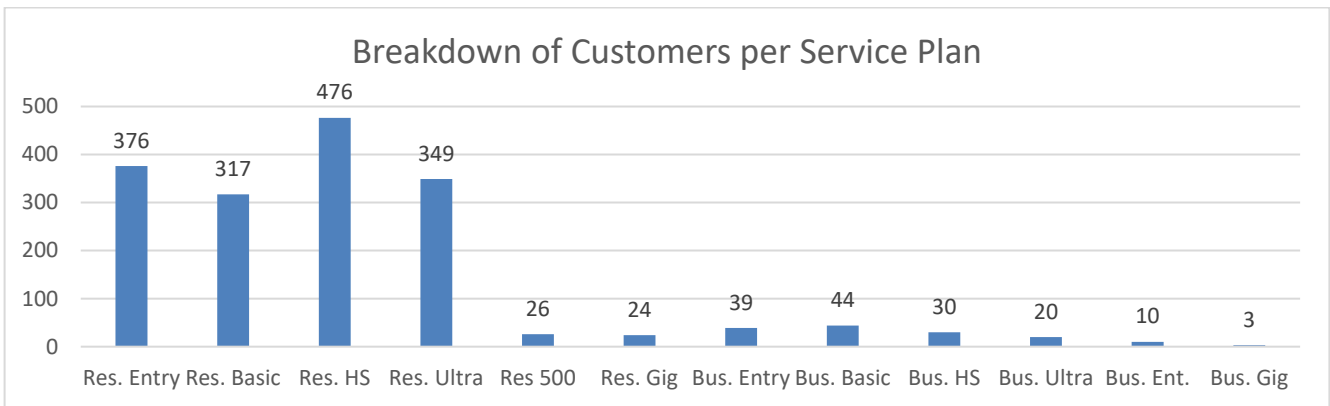
(Customer count: March 2020 – January 2024)



(The number of new installations and disconnects completed each month.)

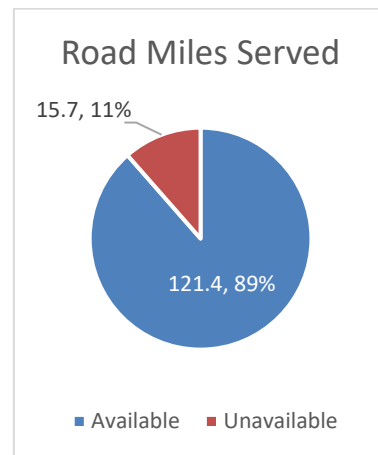
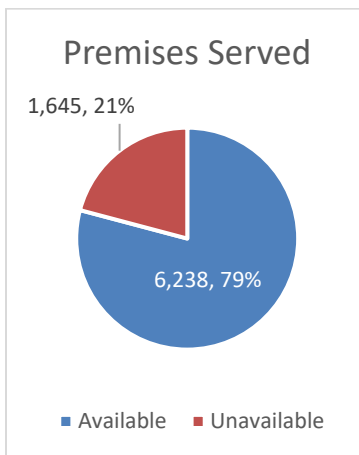
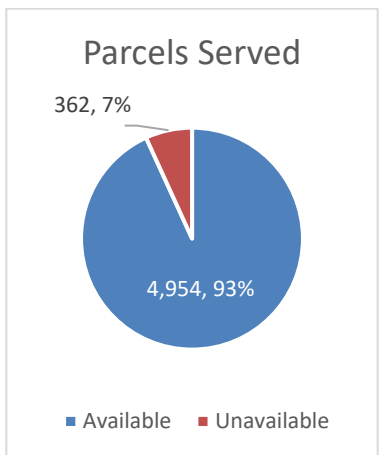


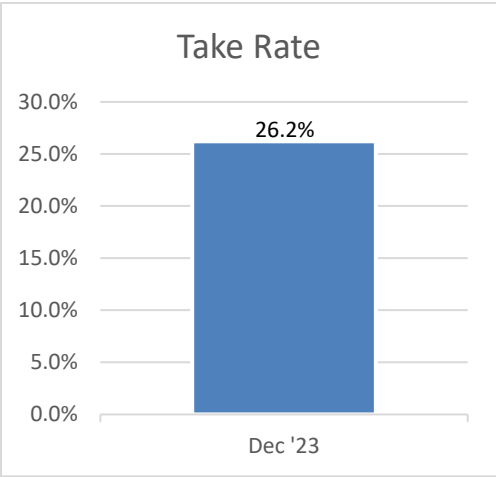
(This is the number of individuals who submit the Broadband interest form, whether they are in the current service area or not.)



(This is the number of each customer on our different service plans as of 1/31/2024.)

Quarterly Metrics





(As of 12/1/2023)

Appendix

Fiber Broadband Completion Task Force's Draft Report Goals

Goal	Type	Priority	Responsible Party	Additional Info.
Policies (p.39)				
• Universal Access	Policy	Highest	Select Board/Town Meeting	
• Expansion outside current territory	Policy	Low	Select Board/Town Meeting	
• Support Economic Vitality, Sustainability, Equity & Inclusion	Policy	High	Select Board/Light Board/TM Economic Development	Rate subsidy available
• Affordable Housing	Policy	Medium	Select Board/Housing Groups	Rate subsidy available
• Public Safety	Policy	Medium	Select Board/Town Manager	
• Education	Policy	Medium	Select Board/School Dept.	
• Government Access (PEG)	Policy	Medium	Select Board/PAAC	
Recommended metrics for tracking (p.41)				
• Parcels served	Metric	Medium	Town Staff/Light Board	Complete; will report quarterly
• Premises served	Metric	Medium	Town Staff/Light Board	Complete; will report quarterly
• Road miles served	Metric	Medium	Town Staff/Light Board	Complete; will report quarterly
• Subscribers	Metric	High	Town Staff/Light Board	Complete; will report monthly
• Take rate	Metric	Medium	Town Staff/Light Board	Complete; will report quarterly
• Churn	Metric	High	Town Staff/Light Board	Complete; included in monthly report
• Installations	Metric	Highest	Town Staff/Light Board	Complete; will report monthly
Governance (p.39)				
• Track progress against completion	Metric	Highest	Light Board/Town Staff	We have been cleaning up the Master Address Table and will have something new to report soon. (11/2023)
• Rate of return policy	Policy	High	Light Board/Town Staff	
• Financial goals with regular reporting	Policy	High	Light Board/FinCom	
• Retained earnings and reserve policy	Policy	High	Light Board/FinCom	

Goal	Type	Priority	Responsible Party	Additional Info.
Strategic Planning Goals (p.43)				
• Marketing and growth	Metric	High	Light Board/Town Staff	
• Business return	Policy	High	Light Board/Town Staff	
Budgeting Process for Fiber Expansion (p.41)				
• Expand to fill existing opportunities	Planning	High	Light Board/Town Staff	
• External funding sources	Research	Medium	Light Board/Town Staff	Working on this
• ARPA Relief Funds Allocation, incl. Lost Revenue	Finance	Highest	Select Board/Town Manager	ARPA funds managed through the budget process.
• Review/Confirm Internal Loan Findings	Finance	Highest	Financial Audit Comm/Staff	Complete
• Review and Rescind PILOF to MMN	Finance	High	Select Board/Town Manager	Complete
Capital Planning Process (p.42)				
• Review/Revise Debt financing schedule	Policy	Highest	Light Board/Town Staff	Working on this; do to positive financial situation, anticipating being able to repay faster than expected.
• Quantifying cost of expansion	Planning	Medium	Town Staff	Working on this
• How to fund expansion	Planning	Medium	Light Board/Town Staff	
• Revise/refine methods for computing ROI	Planning	Medium	Light Board/Town Staff	
Construction and Logistics (p.42)				
• Vibratory plow – direct buried fiber cables	Operations	Medium	Town Staff	Working on this
• Revise/Refine Communication conduit construction standards and guidance	Policy	Medium	Town Staff	
• Integrate Fiber construction with the Roads Program – focus on Streets without fiber that already have underground electric	Planning	High	Town Staff	Working on this

