



CONCORD MUNICIPAL LIGHT PLANT

ELECTRIC | BROADBAND | ENERGY MANAGEMENT

Date: April 2, 2026
To: Municipal Light Board: Warren Leon, John Dalton, Brian Foulds, and Chris Schaffner
From: Jason Bulger, CMLP Director
Subject: Agenda for virtual Light Board meeting on **Wed., April 08, 2026, at 7:30 A.M.** (link below)

- 7:30 AM 1. **Call to Order**
- 7:30 AM 2. **Meetings and Minutes** 5 Minutes Chair Vote
- Vote to approve the regular session minutes of March 4, and March 11, 2026.
- Upcoming Meetings:
May 13, 2026; Jun 10, 2026; Jul 8, 2026; Aug 12, 2026; Sep 9, 2026; Oct 14, 2026
- 7:35 AM 3. **Director’s Update** 10 Minutes Director Information
- 7:45 AM 4. **Broadband Update** 5 Minutes Director Information
- 7:50 AM 5. **Town Meeting Art. 30 – Solar Rooftop Bylaw** 30 Minutes Chair Discussion/Vote
- Background: A citizen’s petition has placed Article 30 on the Town Meeting Warrant titled “Solar Rooftop Bylaw,” which is a requirement of rooftop solar for newly constructed public buildings.
- Purpose: To allow the petitioner to explain the article, allow the Board to ask questions, and allow the Board to vote to take a position on the article.
- 8:20 AM 6. **Liaison & Public Comments** 5 Minutes Chair Information
- 8:25 AM 7. **Executive Session: Power Supply Contracts** 45 Minutes Director Discussion/Vote
- Requires a motion, second and vote to close the regular session and move into an executive session. The Board will not reconvene in regular session. The motion made must include the specific exemption to be used.*
- Pursuant to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Open Meeting Law Purpose for Executive Session #10: to discuss trade secrets or confidential, competitively sensitive, or other proprietary information related to a power supply contract.*
- Background: There are two new power supply contracts to consider.
- Purpose: To get the Board’s opinion on whether CMLP should consider and potentially execute either or both contracts.
- 9:10 AM 8. **Adjourn**



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Distribution:

Kerry Lafleur
Dale Hartling

Joe Repoff
Jennifer Clougherty

Laura Scott
Cameron McKennitt

Nan Okarma
Don Kupka

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83853970051?pwd=akVzemJRQk8vNTJRUnNlOS9NNDlFudFk0T09>

Meeting ID: 838 5397 0051

Passcode: 661712

Link to view recordings of previous Light Board Meetings:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL1TTzrWEKOOOn0RIJ2MdE2SnNZMWYeoat>

Link to view the Director's Updates (in meeting packets):

<https://concordma.gov/1106/Municipal-Light-Board>

Link to view the Broadband Monthly Updates:

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

Draft Minutes for Approval

Concord Municipal Light Board Minutes

3/4/2026

Draft

Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a meeting of the Concord Municipal Light Board was held on Wednesday, March 4, 2026, at 6:00 pm, in person in the Goodwin Forum at the Main Concord Public Library and via a Zoom meeting. Present were Board Members: Warren Leon, John Dalton, Brian Foulds, and Chris Schaffner. Also in attendance were Jason Bulger, CMLP Director; Jennifer Clougherty, Customer Service Manager; Karin Farrow, Office Administrator (via Zoom); and 6-10 attendees.

Definitions for acronyms used in these minutes:

- **CMLP:** Concord Municipal Light Plant
- **TOD:** Time of Day
- **EV:** Electric Vehicle

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Warren Leon called the meeting to order at 6:03pm. Meeting recording will be posted to the Minuteman Media Network YouTube page as soon as it is available.¹

LIGHT BOARD PUBLIC FORUM (0:10)

Mr. Leon explained that the forum was designed to discuss the upcoming transition to time-of-day electricity rates for Concord residents. The event was structured into three parts: a 30-minute presentation by the Board and staff, a formal question-and-answer period, and a final session for one-on-one private discussions (which was not part of the meeting).

During the presentation, the following topics were discussed:

- **Rationale and Benefits:** The Board explained that the shift to Time-of-Day rates is intended to create a fairer system and reduce overall costs for both the utility and residents. By encouraging customers to shift electricity use away from peak demand hours, the town can reduce reliance on expensive transmission and polluting peaker plants.
- **History and Implementation:** The transition is the culmination of planning that began with a 2017 strategic plan and was made possible by the recent installation of new meters and billing system. The new rates take effect on April first 2026, with the first bills arriving in May.
- **Rate Structure:** The plan is revenue-neutral and includes three daily periods: Peak (weekdays, 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.), Super Off-Peak (1:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m.), and Off-Peak (all other times).
- **Phasing and Opt-Out:** The program will launch with Phase 1 rates, which have a smaller price differential to help residents adjust before moving to a larger differential in 2027. Residents may opt out of the program at any time.
- **Tools for Residents:** Staff highlighted resources to help residents save, including the Connected Homes program for smart appliances, simple habit changes, and online usage calculators.

Formal Question and Answer Period

- An audience member asked about the impact on heat pumps and whether they should be turned down during peak hours. The Board and staff advised keeping heat pump settings constant, noting that the low super-off-peak rates typically offset any peak usage for these units.

¹ Minuteman Media YouTube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BfmsKY1SLEc>

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- An audience member asked about the average savings expected for those who shift their loads. The Board explained that because the rates are revenue-neutral, anyone who successfully moves electricity use to off-peak periods will see a reduction in their bill compared to the old flat rate.
- An audience member asked about EV charging and how the Connected Homes program interacts with charger settings. The Board clarified that while the program automates charging for low-cost times, users can manually override it if they need to charge immediately.
- An audience member asked if the program is permanent and how it might change. The Board confirmed this is the intended rate structure moving forward, though it will be reviewed annually and will transition to Phase 2 with a higher peak price in the second year. There is no Phase 3.
- An audience member asked about other municipalities using similar systems. The Board noted that utilities in Groton, Massachusetts, and Sacramento, California, have successfully implemented similar opt-out time-of-day programs.

Seeing no other questions, Mr. Leon entertained a motion to adjourn.

ADJOURN (40:51)

Mr. Schaffner moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Dalton offered a second, and members voted the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:44pm.

**Respectfully submitted,
Mr. Dalton, Clerk**

Concord Municipal Light Board Minutes

03/11/2026

Draft

Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a meeting of the Concord Municipal Light Board was held on Wednesday, March 11, 2026, at 7:30 am, via a Zoom meeting. Present were Board Members: Warren Leon, John Dalton, Brian Foulds, and Chris Schaffner. Also in attendance were Jason Bulger, CMLP Director; Laura Scott, Assistant Director of Power Supply and Energy Management; Joe Repoff, Assistant Director of Engineering and Operations; Nan Okarma, Financial Manager; Karin Farrow, Office Administrator; Jesse Wooster, AMI Analyst; Don Kupka, Finance Committee Liaison; Dakota Antelman, Concord Bridge; and residents Andy Puchrik, Pamela Dritt, and Dean Banfield.

Definitions for acronyms used in these minutes:

- **CMLP:** Concord Municipal Light Plant
- **TOD:** Time of Day

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Leon called the meeting to order at 7:33am. Meeting recording will be posted to the Minuteman Media Network YouTube page as soon as it is available.¹

MEETING MINUTES (0:12)

Mr. Dalton moved to approve the regular session minutes for 2/11/2026 as distributed. Mr. Foulds offered a second, and the motion passed, with members Foulds, Dalton, and Leon voting in favor (Mr. Schaffner arrived after the vote).

CHAIR'S UPDATE (0:52)

Mr. Leon mentioned that Bianca Taylor resigned due to personal reasons, and he thanked her for her service and perspective. Mr. Leon mentioned that Ms. Taylor was the Light Board's representative on the Financial Audit Advisory Committee.

Mr. Foulds moved to appoint Chris Schaffner to the Financial Audit Advisory Committee as the Light Board's representative. Mr. Dalton offered the second, and with a unanimous (4-0) vote, the motion passed.

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE (6:27)

Mr. Bulger thanked the staff and the 12 personnel who were present at the Light Plant during the blizzard two weeks prior. He noted that it was a relatively quiet storm with only three total call-outs for individual customers.

Mr. Bulger provided updates on several solar and energy storage projects:

- **Middle School Project:** The Light Plant successfully assisted the school district in applying for a grant of nearly \$1.4 million, which would significantly reduce project costs. Mr. Bulger mentioned ongoing discussions with Mr. Conry regarding solar and school bus electrification plans. He noted that school committee members appeared flexible and willing to support the project, specifically regarding construction schedules to avoid interfering with school operations. A final announcement on the grant is expected in May.

¹ Minuteman Media YouTube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WgJ6Z4DiseA>

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- **Landfill Project:** A meeting was held with the Town Planner, Building Commissioner, and representatives from Kearsarge to discuss permitting for additional solar and potential energy storage at the landfill. Coordination is also underway with Public Works and the Fire Department to ensure fire safety and proper infrastructure for other site tenants, such as a cell tower company. The goal is to complete this project in 2026.

Mr. Bulger reminded the Board that the enterprise hearing for the 2026 budget was scheduled for the following day. He explained that the warrant article for the Light Plant is typically a single article on the consent calendar that authorizes the Town Manager to expend an amount including fund balances. He also thanked Ms. Okarma and other staff for their work in preparing the necessary budget documents and presentation.

Regarding staffing, Mr. Bulger announced the retirement of Annie and Donna a week earlier. He noted that a new Utility Billing Coordinator was expected to start soon and that interviews were being conducted for a Senior Meter Technician replacement for Johnny, who was retiring at the beginning of April.

Finally, he mentioned ongoing discussions regarding Light Plant and Light Board governance, noting that recommendations from a study group may result in a warrant article for the next year's Town Meeting. The item may be before the Select Board shortly after this year's Town Meeting.

BROADBAND REPORT (21:31)

Mr. Bulger provided an update on the XGS-PON migration, noting that the first wave of about 350 customers occurred in early February. While the majority of these customers were migrated successfully, he acknowledged there were some initial hiccups during the rollout. Several minor issues were corrected on the morning of the migration, but some lingering problems remained for non-traditional accounts. These specific accounts include entities that use the service to connect multiple sites within Concord rather than for standard internet access, such as the school district's connection to the Knox Trail bus depot and the Public Works department's water and sewer SCADA sites.

Following several days of troubleshooting, staff implemented temporary workarounds and eventually identified the root cause as faulty software from the vendor. Mr. Bulger stated that the new software has been undergoing testing and appears stable, which will allow Concord Broadband to proceed with the remainder of the migration. During the testing process, technicians also discovered that some optical modules were faulty, and the vendor is in the process of replacing that hardware.

Customers will be notified when the next wave of migrations is scheduled.

LIGHT BOARD FORUM DEBRIEF (25:02)

Mr. Leon introduced the debrief of the public meeting held the previous week, noting that the discussion would likely be brief due to low attendance. He suggested that the small turnout might indicate that residents are either not yet focused on the transition to Time-of-Day (TOD) rates or are comfortable enough with the information provided that they do not have many burning questions.

Mr. John Dalton proposed that the low attendance could also be attributed to the effectiveness of the event's

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advertising. He suggested that having a notice in the Bridge the week prior might have been useful and noted that this was a lesson to be learned for future outreach.

Mr. Foulds commented that while he saw the mailed printed materials and believed there was awareness, many people likely do not feel concerned because the change has not yet impacted their bills. He predicted that despite current efforts, many residents may only start asking questions in May once the transition is underway. Mr. Foulds suggested that the Board might need to hold another public forum three to six months into the transition to assist with ongoing awareness.

Mr. Schaffner inquired about the number of online participants. Mr. Bulger reported that approximately four people joined the meeting online. Mr. Schaffner noted that because the forum was on the Access channel and YouTube, it was difficult to know how many people might be watching repeats of the session. Mr. Bulger added that the recording is available on the Time-of-Day Resources page and the Minuteman Media YouTube channel, where hit counts for the video could be tracked. Mr. Schaffner concluded that while the turnout was disappointing, the event itself went well. Mr. Leon thanked the Board members for their attendance and closed the topic.

CALENDAR 2024 AUDIT UPDATE (28:37)

Mr. Leon opened the discussion by clarifying that the 2024 audit had been completed, while the 2025 audit was currently in its preliminary stages. Mr. Jason Bulger explained the typical annual audit cycle, noting that the books for the calendar year are generally closed by late March, followed by on-site or hybrid fieldwork in April and May. This process involves the auditors requesting policies, invoices, and journal entry history to prepare financial statements and identify any necessary correcting entries. These finalized audits then feed into Department of Public Utilities (DPU) reporting, financial forecasting, and rate-setting requirements.

Mr. Bulger detailed the specific challenges and delays encountered during the 2024 cycle. He noted that the previous auditors were unavailable and missed scheduled site visits in May 2025. Furthermore, significant delays occurred because the Town of Concord had not reconciled its cash accounts for some time, which impacted the Municipal Light Plant's ability to reconcile its own books. Because the Town operates on a fiscal year (July to June) while the Light Plant operates on a calendar year, adjustments made to the Town's 2024 fiscal year affected the Light Plant's already-audited 2023 records.

To address these issues, the decision was made to proceed with the audit despite a \$170,000 variance between the Light Plant's system and the Town's records. Mr. Bulger stated that the auditors issued an opinion that the financial statements were accurate but noted a "material weakness" due to the inability to reconcile cash with the Town. Consequently, the Light Plant hired Clifton Larson Allen, a consulting firm, to perform a forensic reconciliation back to 2023. Preliminary findings suggested the variance was largely due to a lack of communication regarding journal entries for items like pension payments and Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB).

Mr. Bulger reported several improvements moving forward:

- The Town has committed to reconciling cash within 45 days of month-end and improving communication regarding journal entries.
- The Light Plant has transitioned to a new auditing firm, Goulet, Salvadio & Associates, which specializes in municipal light plant audits.

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- Initial pre-work and physical inventory checks with the new auditors were completed in early 2025.

Mr. Foulds inquired if the Light Plant could change its financial cycle to match the Town's to avoid these timing issues. Mr. Bulger clarified that DPU regulations require the Light Plant to maintain a calendar year cycle. He noted that the interdependency between the Town and the Light Plant's finance departments is a central part of ongoing governance discussions.

Mr. Dalton expressed that the Town's 45-day reconciliation commitment would be a major improvement. Mr. Bulger agreed, noting that this timeline aligns with the Light Plant's requirement to close its own periods within 90 days. Mr. Leon requested that Mr. Bulger provide a follow-up report in a few months regarding the ongoing experience with the new auditing firm.

RATE HEARING (43:44)

Mr. Schaffner moved to suspend the meeting in progress and enter into a rate hearing, and with a second by Mr. Dalton, the Board voted unanimously to enter into the rate hearing.

Ms. Scott addressed the existing R7 rate, formally known as the Electric Resistance and Heat Pump Heating System Domestic Hot Water Rate. She explained that this rate was originally designed to allow customers with heat pumps to install a second, separate meter that would measure only heat pump usage. This structure was created to avoid penalizing customers under the prior tiered rate system, where higher usage resulted in higher marginal costs.

Ms. Scott stated that, under the new Time-of-Day rate structure, the original purpose of the R7 rate was no longer relevant. Because the TOD rate does not penalize higher usage in the same way as the tiered rate, customers with heat pumps would generally fare better under the TOD structure. She noted that while individual outcomes may vary, the overall analysis indicated that most customers would benefit from the transition.

Ms. Scott further explained that approximately 40 customers were currently on the R7 rate. She emphasized that eliminating the rate would transition those customers onto the TOD rate, aligning them with the broader customer base.

A key takeaway from her presentation was that the R7 rate was a transitional construct tied to the old rate design, and its elimination was a necessary step to fully implement TOD rates in a consistent and equitable manner.

Ms. Scott then discussed second meter fees. She explained that under the existing R7 structure, customers with a second meter were not charged any additional meter fee beyond the standard \$20 monthly customer charge on their primary account. She stated that this created an inconsistency, as additional meters impose real costs on the Light Plant, including installation, maintenance, and meter reading.

She presented a proposal to institute a uniform policy whereby all additional meters would incur a monthly fixed charge. She noted that cost-of-service analysis suggested a fee closer to \$9 per month, and that higher values such as \$12.50 had been considered. However, staff recommended a lower introductory fee of \$6.50 per month to ease the transition, particularly for customers who had not previously paid any second meter charge.

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Ms. Scott also explained that this fee would not be embedded in the tariff schedules themselves, but instead incorporated into the Light Plant's terms and conditions. This would provide flexibility and consistency across different rate classes.

Finally, Ms. Scott discussed a proposed terminology change, recommending that the "service charge" or "meter charge" be renamed to "customer charge" to more accurately reflect the nature of the cost, which includes more than just the physical meter, and match the language already given to the billing provider.

Mr. Foulds reflected on the historical rationale for the R7 rate, stating that it had originally been implemented to avoid discouraging adoption of heat pumps under a tiered rate system. He noted that since the TOD rate eliminates that penalty, removing the R7 rate was logically consistent with the new structure.

Mr. Schaffner asked whether these customers might choose to remove their second meters in order to avoid the proposed monthly fee. Ms. Scott explained that while customers could eliminate the second meter, doing so would require electrical work to reconnect the system to the main panel, which would involve hiring an electrician. She clarified that while the Light Plant could physically remove the meter, it could not perform the internal rewiring, meaning there would be a cost barrier to doing so.

Mr. Foulds raised a technical point regarding submeters, noting that if systems were not properly metered, it could result in unmetered electricity usage. Ms. Scott responded that the Light Plant had largely eliminated submeters due to billing complications and acknowledged that only a small number may still exist.

Discussion then shifted to the structure and presentation of the proposed second meter fee on customer bills. Mr. Foulds asked how the charge would appear—whether it would be combined into a single line item or shown separately. Mr. Bulger explained that the standard \$20 customer charge would remain, and the additional \$6.50 charge would appear as a separate line item for customers with additional meters, except in cases where specific tariffs (such as ETS) explicitly waive the fee.

Mr. John Dalton expressed support for renaming the "meter charge" to "customer charge," noting that the charge reflects a broader set of costs beyond the meter itself. He stated that the revised terminology would better communicate the nature of the charge to customers.

Mr. Leon confirmed that the billing structure would clearly distinguish between the base customer charge and any additional meter-related charges, ensuring transparency.

Throughout the discussion, Board members generally expressed agreement that:

- The R7 rate was no longer necessary under TOD rates
- A second meter fee was appropriate to reflect actual system costs
- The proposed \$6.50 fee represented a reasonable transitional approach
- Renaming the charge would improve customer understanding

Mr. Leon asked if there was any public comment. Pamela Dritt emphasizing that rate design should actively incentivize electrification rather than merely avoid penalizing it. She argued that customers installing heat pumps and solar systems provide broader community benefits, including reduced emissions and improved public health, and that rates should reflect and encourage those benefits. Ms. Dritt further stated that if operating heat pumps under TOD rates were more expensive, the Board should reconsider eliminating the R7 rate or ensure that alternative structures maintain affordability for electrified homes.

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Ms. Scott stated that earlier analysis showed that customers would generally pay less under TOD rates, though she acknowledged that the analysis was a few years old and could be updated.

No additional public comments were offered.

Mr. Schaffner moved to adjourn the Rate Hearing and resume the regular meeting, and with a second by Mr. Foulds, the Board voted unanimously to close the rate hearing.

The Board took the following action:

Mr. Schaffner moved that the Board:

- **Cancel the R-7 Residential Service - Electric Resistance & Heat Pump Heating Systems rate effective April 1st, 2026;**
- **With the exception of the rates that explicitly waive the meter fee, we set the multiple meter fee at \$6.50 per month to be handled in the Light Plant's Terms and Conditions; and**
- **Change the name of the flat monthly fee from "Service / Meter Charge" to "Customer charge."**
With a second from Mr. Dalton, the Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

PUBLIC COMMENT (1:08:26)

- Pamela Dritt asked about Bianca Taylor's departure from the Board, and Mr. Leon responded it was for personal reasons.
- Don Kupka spoke during the discussion of the 2024 Financial Audit results. He asked whether the material weakness identified in the audit, specifically related to cash reconciliation discrepancies between the Town and the Light Plant, was a recurring issue or a first-time occurrence. In response, staff clarified that this was the first time such a finding had been identified in their experience, and that steps were already underway to resolve the discrepancy and prevent future occurrences.
- Dean Banfield thanked Board members for their service and indicated that he planned to return at a future meeting to present and advocate for a petition article.

ADJOURN (1:11:34)

Mr. Foulds moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Schaffner offered a second, and members voted the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:45am.

**Respectfully submitted,
Mr. Dalton, Clerk**

Concord Municipal Light Plant Updates

March 11, 2026

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Organization and Industry

- **Governor Healey’s “10x10x10” Energy Supply Plan Executive Order**
 On March 16, 2026, Governor Maura Healey signed Executive Order No. 654, establishing the “10x10x10” Energy Supply Plan to secure 10 gigawatts of new energy resources over the next 10 years and save ratepayers an estimated \$10 billion. This “all-of-the-above” strategy specifically targets 4 GW of new solar and 3.5 GW of demand-side resources, while setting a separate, aggressive goal for 5 GW of energy storage by 2035. For Municipal Light Plants (MLPs) and their customers, the order is particularly significant as it directs state agencies to dismantle deployment barriers and explore local “firm” power sources like advanced nuclear and geothermal energy. Furthermore, the plan mandates flexible interconnection reforms, which will allow local utilities to connect new projects to the grid faster and at a lower cost than traditional upgrades. By prioritizing regional energy independence, this executive order aims to shield Massachusetts communities from the price volatility of global fossil fuel markets.

- **Bipartisan Push for Advanced Nuclear Power**
 In a significant policy shift, the governors of all six New England states issued a joint statement committing to explore advanced nuclear energy technologies. This regional collaboration focuses on maintaining existing nuclear resources while investigating small modular reactors (SMRs) to provide “firm” carbon-free power as regional electricity demand is projected to double by 2045.

- **Revolution Wind Begins Delivering Power**

The 704 MW **Revolution Wind** offshore project officially began delivering electricity to the New England grid this month. This milestone strengthens regional reliability and introduces a massive new source of winter-peaking energy, which helps stabilize the wholesale market prices that directly influence municipal power supply costs.

- **ISO-NE 2026 Forecast: Winter Demand Surge**

In its March updates, ISO-New England emphasized that regional winter peak demand is now projected to double over the next 20 years due to the rapid adoption of heat pumps and EVs. This forecast is driving state-wide efforts to prioritize “demand-side” resources like managed EV charging and home batteries to prevent future grid strain.

Time-of-Day Rollout

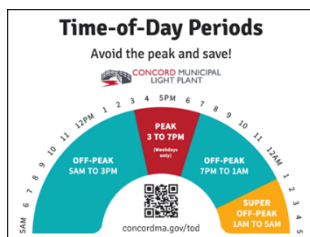
- Staff continue to generate additional internal resources and provide training to staff. An advanced workshop for customer service is scheduled for April 9th.

- CMLP staff held an information session at the Council on Aging (Harvey Wheeler) on March 18th at 2:30pm for the final in-person outreach event. It was well-attended with about 15 people.



- Direct communications have gone out to key groups (like ETS customers, heat pump owners, and solar customers). Further emails are expected to go out the week of April 6th.

- We are finalizing the post go-live emails that are scheduled to start in early May to reinforce the items to make customers successful under TOD.

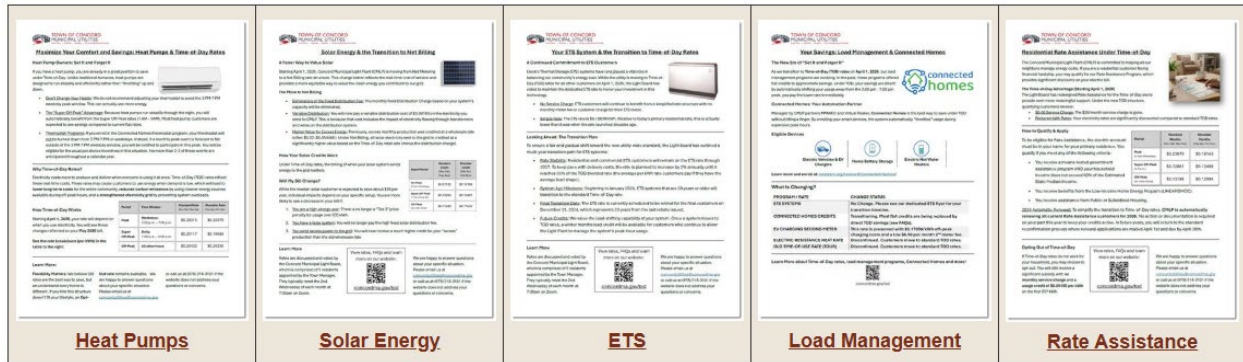


- Magnets arrived! Stop by CMLP during business hours to grab yours.

- We are awaiting word on our bill print work to begin testing. The next phase will commence around 4/10.

- We have great results from our AMI meters, but we do consistently have about a dozen meters that don't cross our threshold for confidence on TOD billing. We will work with our vendor to troubleshoot and/or replace these meters to ensure accurate billing. That's a terrific success rate with nearly 7,000 residential meters.

- Don't forget to check out our one page resources below:



<https://concordma.gov/4127/Time-of-Day-Resources>

Energy Management

- Energy Management staff has been working with other CMLP divisions to educate customers and other stakeholders about the new TOD rates. This has included:
 - Preparing a draft slide deck on net billing for customers with solar and/or batteries.
 - Refining resource documents and FAQs for customers with solar, batteries, EVs and heat pumps.
 - Sending TOD educational materials to heat pump owners and installers.
- The Concord Bridge published a [letter to the editor](#) by heating/cooling coach Ethan Herberman. The letter emphasized the incentives, no interest loans and coaching services available to those interested in exploring heat pumps for their home.
- Staff has been recruiting outreach partners to help us spread the word about energy efficiency and electrification incentive and loan programs, services, events, successes and milestones. To date, we've met with communications staff from the library, town manager's office, Climate Action Network, Mothers Out Front, Cooler Concord and Council on Aging, and all have agreed to distribute our material on a regular basis via their newsletters and social media platforms. For example, Donna McIntosh included several of our pieces in the [March 9th edition](#) of Concord Currents.
- CMLP customers living in an existing single family or a 2- to 4-unit home are now eligible for \$650 to \$1,300 offered by the New England Heat Pump Accelerator – in addition to Mass Save or CMLP rebates when customers switch partially or fully to heat pump heating and cooling.

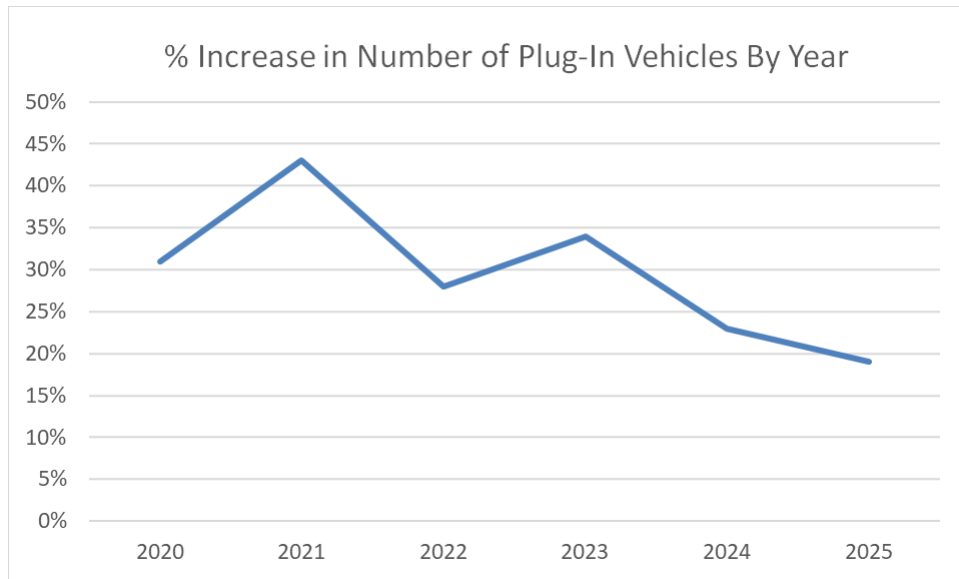
The New England Heat Pump Accelerator is a regional program to speed up heat pump adoption in homes across Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, using a \$450 million grant awarded to the 5-state coalition from the EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grants.

For the pass-through incentive, the customer's heat pump installer provides the customer's name, address, phone number and email to a participating distributor upon purchase of the heat

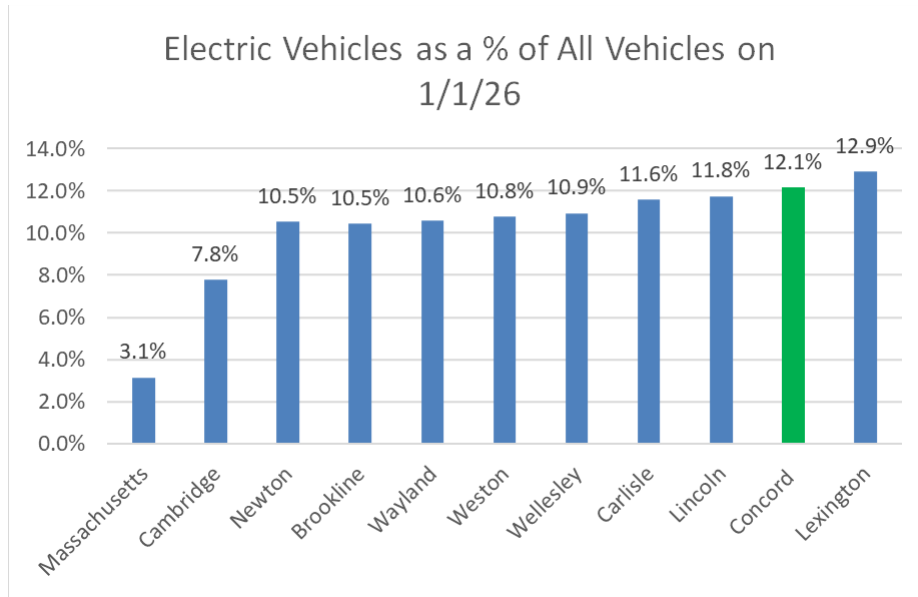
pump equipment for the home. The air-source heat pump incentive is \$650 per outdoor condenser, up to 2 condensers per address. The distributor discounts the sale price by the amount of the incentive, and the installer passes the incentive through to the customer as a credit on their invoice.

CMLP staff promoted the new incentive in our 3/26/26 e-newsletter, added information about it to the “Rebates, Incentives and Equipment Eligibility Requirements” section of our Heat Pump Rebates for Your Home webpage, and emailed heat installers about it so they can encourage their distributors to participate in the Accelerator’s Pass-through Incentive Program.

- The Massachusetts Vehicle Census, updated on January 1, 2026, provides additional insight into electric vehicle adoption in Concord. While the number of plug-in electric vehicles in Town continues to increase year over year, the rate of increase has slowed.



Concord continues to have the 2nd highest percentage of EVs relative to all vehicles in town, compared to a group of Massachusetts communities with high rates of EV adoption.



Battery Storage and Solar Project Updates

- School Administration applied for a MassCEC Green School Works grant for the middle school solar project. Announcements for grant winners should be announced in May.
- CMLP has met with a solar developer who could build the project under a PPA-style arrangement. We are working on getting similar pricing with ideally two additional firms to verify market pricing. This information would come to the Board at a future meeting, and a subsequent conversation would take place with the schools if the Board wished to move forward with that methodology.
- After positive meetings with the Fire Department and Public Works staff, Kearsarge is planning to submit their special permit application to the Planning Board on April 6, 2026 for their planned expansion of the landfill solar and the inclusion of a 5MW/20MWh battery on the site. Several CMLP staff spent significant time advancing this project.
- CMLP continues to support the ongoing expansion of the electric school bus fleet at the bus depot on Knox Trail. The grant deadline for the new Level 3 charger is June 1.

Finance Updates

- The forensic cash reconciliation performed by CLA has completed for the calendar years of 2023-2024. Nearly all variances were a matter of timing, where things like police details and pension costs were booked during different periods between the CMLP and Town financial software. CMLP and Town finance staff met to review the reconciliation and left with several

ideas that could streamline the ongoing process and lead to a smoother year-end for both sides.

- Month end for December 2025 has been closed. We wish to thank all CMLP finance staff for this accomplishment. It takes a lot of work to close all of the modules in our vast ERP, including work orders, payroll, accounts payable, necessary journal entries, and fuel usage.
- Staff did preparation for the Accounts Payable automation from NISC. That will commence at the end of April, with a projected go-live some time this summer. It should save staff time when inputting these vendor bills.

Engineering and Operations

- CMLP Engineering and Line teams continue to discuss the possibility of substation upgrades to allow for participation in transmission with Eversource collaboration. With the support of PLM, we have identified a way to expand the proposed transmission capability, but it will take further review and study before an actual design is advanced.
- Team members took training from Caterpillar on a new excavation machine received.
- Engineering continued to work with DCAMM on their request to separate power delivery between the MCI campus and the wastewater treatment plant.
- The Facilities division has vacated Substation 223.
- CMLP has received a very large order of SCADA equipment to Substation 223, where it will be installed later this year.
- Engineering and Operations continues to support the NOVO and other 40B projects being built in Concord.
- A new streetlight manufacturer is being sought with style offerings similar to what is already installed in Concord.
- CMLP has been supporting the make-ready work for small cell installations by AT&T on Sudbury Road. This project is winding down.
- The CMLP garage lights are being converted to high efficiency LED lights.
- Operations and Engineering are working with the Planning division and their contractor to update the regulations associated with permits and subdivisions.
- Ongoing support of the work at the bus depot to expand fleet electrification.



Power Supply

- Worked on preparing updates to rates for the March Light Board meeting.
- Work extensively to support the expansion of solar and deployment of energy storage at the landfill.
 - Coordinated meetings with stakeholders
 - Did research and collected information
 - Briefed colleagues and shared drawings and plans
 - Attended meetings and performed analysis on proposed changes
- Discussed the notion of a PPA with Plankton regarding solar installation at 300 Baker Avenue.
- Supported the Time-of-Day effort, including:
 - Updating the website to remove references to EV Miles
 - Addressing customer inquiries on changes under TOD
 - Created and updated customer documentation
- Researched battery pushback and set up a meeting with Belmont's engineers to understand their policy and how they accept it on their system.
- Attended Emergency call handling training
- Worked with Energy Management staff on solar explainer and coordinated their feedback for TOD materials.
- Attended PUMIC investment strategy meeting
- Set up a call regarding a PPA model at the middle school and researched other vendors who provide these services.
- Calculated the current REC charge for Accounting

Customer Service

- Supporting ongoing billing efforts and coordinating with staff, Public Works, and NISC when issues arise.
- Coordinated the upgrade of the Eaton Yukon system – all was successful.
- Worked on procuring a large batch of electric meters compatible with Eaton's system.
- Ashley Price started on March 16 as a temporary Utility Billing Coordinator assisting with billing activities.
- Supported extensive Time-of-Day activities, including:

- Coordinating TOD tickets with our software vendor
 - Holding weekly update meetings to review progress and assign tasks
 - Sending out communications regarding program changes.
- AMI Analyst gave a presentation on how data flows from a meter through the Meter Data Management system.
- Screened several potential new hires for multiple roles while identifying coverage for recently departed employees.



TOWN OF CONCORD MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

ELECTRIC | WATER | SEWER | TELECOMMUNICATIONS

March 2026 – 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

- The team advanced the XGS-PON migration, completing key software upgrades, validating the new E7 platform, and successfully activating the division's first paying XGS-PON customers.
- Resolved several Yukon gateway issues through onsite resets, configuration adjustments, and vendor coordination, stabilizing service for affected areas.
- Investigated and mitigated external probing of the broadband network, strengthening monitoring and evaluating protective measures to address potential vulnerabilities.
- Completed a broad set of customer installations, walk-throughs, and service updates, maintaining strong throughput despite ongoing migration and vendor-related challenges.
- Continued progress on the Peabody School network build, including reviewing as-built documentation, addressing power/UPS issues, and integrating alarms and equipment with Town systems.
- Updated DHCP and routing configurations, improving stability for broadband and Town services following earlier software issues and vendor configuration changes.
- Expanded team capabilities with Calix Broadband Engineer and Architecture certifications, strengthening in-house expertise for the ongoing fiber and XGS-PON modernization.
- Communicated proactively with customers regarding migration impacts, service outages, and system improvements using targeted iVue Messenger outreach.

Challenges of Spreading Fiber Broadband

In the world of municipal broadband, there is a recurring challenging scenario for planners: a town that had the foresight to underground its power lines decades ago, but did so before the internet was a line item on any budget.

While underground utilities are aesthetically pleasing and resilient against storms, they create a massive hidden barrier to entry for fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) networks. When a town starts a broadband business today in a

Upcoming Maintenance

There will be additional maintenance windows in April and May of 2026. When the dates are chosen, we will update the maintenance page here:

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

neighborhood where the power is already buried – but no spare communication conduit was laid – the cost and complexity of reaching each parcel skyrocket.

The “Stranded Parcel” Problem

The gold standard for fiber deployment is a “Dig Once” environment, where a network of conduits (hollow pipes) already exists. In that scenario, bringing fiber to a home is as simple as “blowing” or pulling a glass thread through an existing pipe.

However, in many older undergrounded towns, the power lines were direct-buried or placed in conduits that are now at capacity or sealed. There is no “Path B” for the fiber. This leaves every single home as a mini-construction project. To get from the street (the “Right of Way”) to the side of the house (the “Premise”), you have to break ground.

1. The Cost of the “Last Mile”

In an aerial environment, a technician simply strings a wire from a pole to the eaves of a house. In a “conduit-less” underground environment, that same 100-foot gap can cost \$1,500 to \$4,000 per home depending on the soil and driveway configuration. For a municipal business model, this often breaks the Return on Investment (ROI).

2. The Invisible Obstacle Course

Because the power is already underground, the “ground” is a minefield. Digging a new path for fiber risks hitting:

- Existing Power Lines, which are highly dangerous and expensive to repair.
- Water and Sewer, which are often poorly mapped in older neighborhoods.
- Irrigation and Landscaping, which are an obstacle to a trench for conduit.

Technical Workarounds (and Their Flaws)

When you can’t just slide fiber into an existing pipe, engineers have to get creative. Here are the common solutions for reaching premises without conduit, ranked from most to least intrusive.

Microtrenching

This involves using a high-speed saw to cut a narrow, shallow groove (usually 1–2 inches wide and 12 inches deep) into the asphalt of the road or the edge of a curb.

- **The Pros:** Much faster than traditional digging and stays within the “hard” surface.

- **The Cons:** It only gets the fiber to the curb. You still have to bridge the gap from the curb to the house across the yard. Additionally, many towns worry about the long-term integrity of the road surface after it's been altered.

Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD)

Often called "boring," this uses a steerable drill bit to tunnel under lawns, driveways, and sidewalks without disturbing the surface.

- **The Pros:** It preserves the homeowner's landscaping and can go under expensive obstructions like heated driveways.
- **The Cons:** It is the most expensive method. It also requires "pot-holing" (digging small holes to visually verify other utilities) to ensure the drill doesn't strike an existing power line.

Vibratory Plowing / Direct Burial

A specialized machine "slices" the earth and tucks a ruggedized, armored fiber cable directly into the slit, which then closes behind the machine.

- **The Pros:** Extremely fast in open turf and relatively cheap.
- **The Cons:** It cannot go through rock, roots, or concrete. If the cable is ever damaged (by a shovel or a rodent), it cannot be "pulled out" and replaced like a conduit-based cable; you have to dig the whole thing up again.

The Hard Truth: No Silver Bullet

None of these solutions are as favorable as a dedicated conduit. Without a pipe, you lose future-proofing. If fiber technology changes or the glass breaks in 20 years, a conduit-based town can swap the cable in an hour. A town that direct-buried its fiber or used micro-trenching will have to repeat the entire construction process from scratch.

For a municipality, the complexity isn't just engineering – it's public relations. Residents who love their wire-free views are often the first to complain when the city's new broadband utility has to dig a trench across their front lawn to deliver the service they demanded.

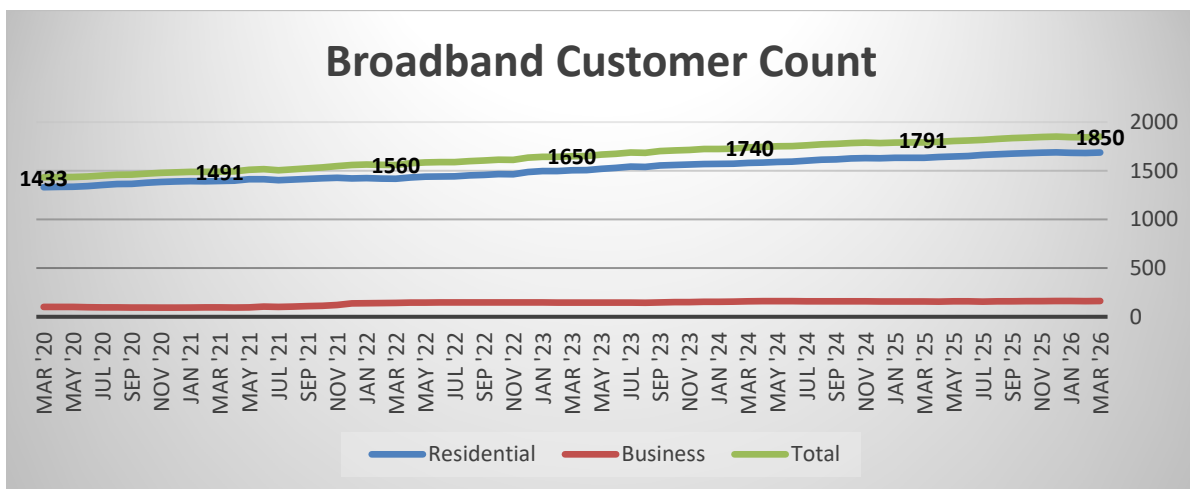
Conclusion

Building a municipal fiber network in a town like Concord, where the infrastructure was largely laid before the digital age, is a study in patience and precision. We have chosen not to take the easy path of "quick-and-dirty" deployments that might offer immediate gratification but fail to serve our community's needs in the long run. By prioritizing robust, high-quality engineering, even in the challenging, conduit-poor

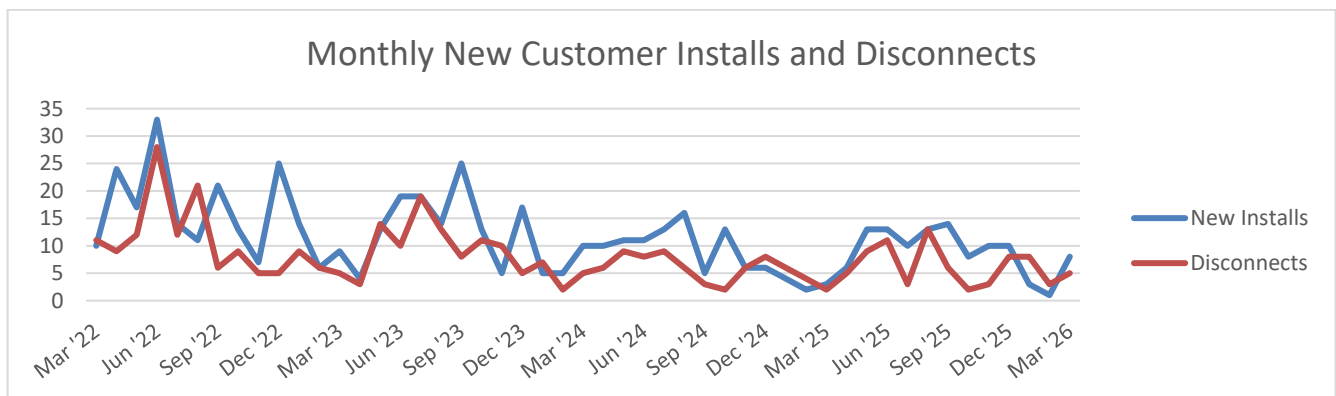
environments we inherited, we are ensuring that our network is not just a solution for today, but a foundational asset for the next thirty years.

We recognize that this methodical approach can be slower than the rapid overbuilds seen elsewhere. However, for Concord Broadband, doing it right means refusing to cut corners on the long-term integrity of our town's infrastructure. We are building a network designed for durability, reliability, and future-proof performance, ensuring that once that fiber is finally in the ground, it provides the steadfast service our residents expect and deserve for decades to come.

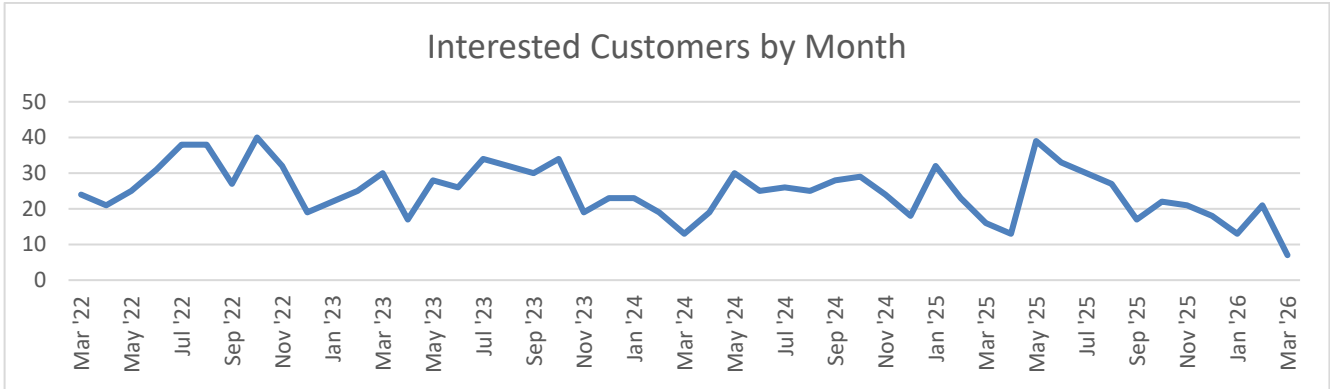
Monthly Metrics and Business Data



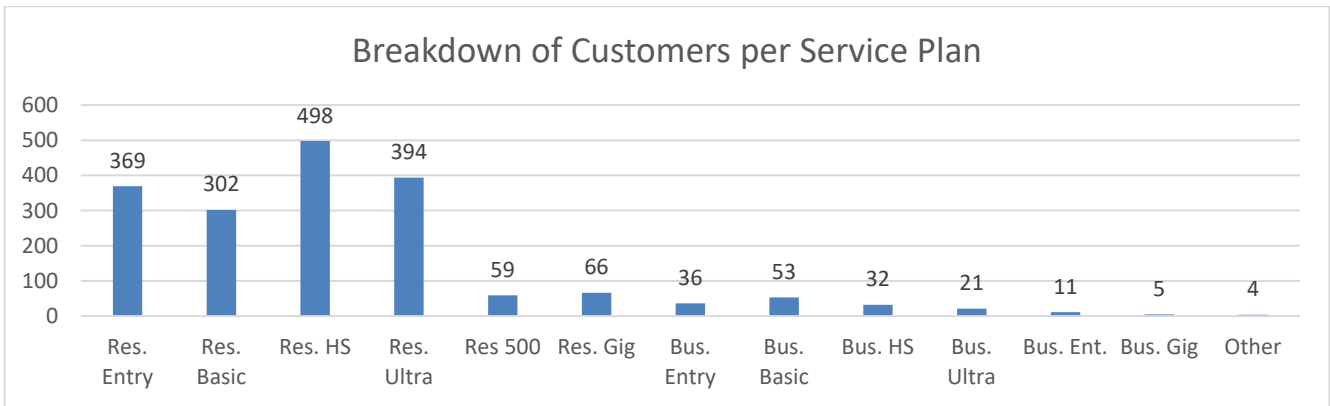
(Customer count: March 2020 – Present)



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

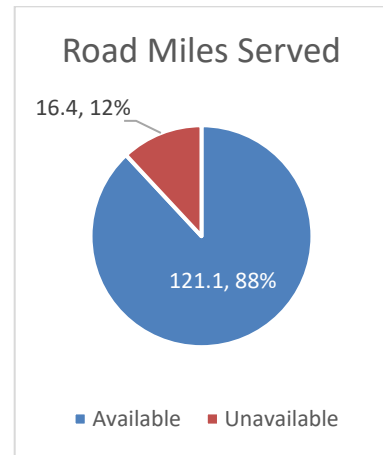
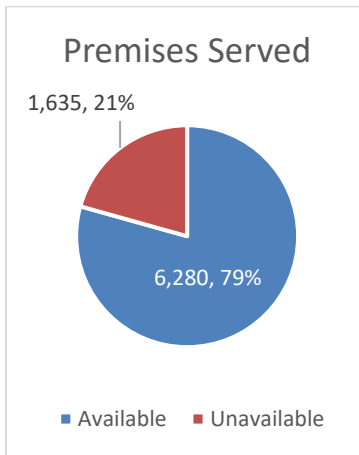
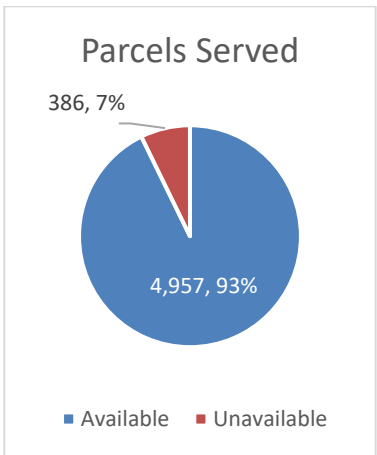


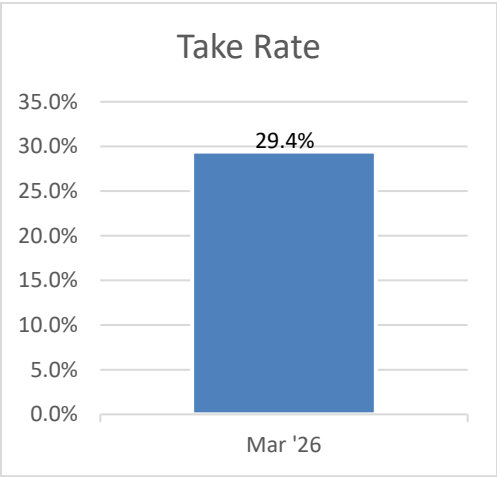
(This is the number of individuals who submit the Broadband interest form, whether they are in the current service area or not.)



(This is the number of each customer on our different service plans as of 3/31/2026.)

Other Metrics





(As of 2/15/2026)

Appendix

Fiber Broadband Completion Task Force's 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	Conversations happening
• Support Economic Vitality, Sustainability, Equity & Inclusion	Policy	High	Select Board/Light Board/TM Economic Development	Rate subsidy planned
• Affordable Housing	Policy	Medium	Select Board/Housing Groups	Rate subsidy planned; working on Concord Housing Authority properties
• 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	Working on this
• Rate of return policy	Policy	High	Light Board/Town Staff	Working on this
• Financial goals with regular reporting	Policy	High	Light Board/FinCom	Working on this
• Retained earnings and reserve policy	Policy	High	Light Board/FinCom	Working on this

Goal	Type	Priority	Responsible Party	Additional Info.
Strategic Planning Goals (p.43)				
• Marketing and growth	Metric	High	Light Board/Town Staff	Working on this
• Business return	Policy	High	Light Board/Town Staff	Working on this
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	Complete
• 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	In progress; due to positive financial situation, anticipating being able to repay faster.
• Quantifying cost of expansion	Planning	Medium	Town Staff	Working on this
• How to fund expansion	Planning	Medium	Light Board/Town Staff	Working on this
• Revise/refine methods for computing ROI	Planning	Medium	Light Board/Town Staff	Working on this
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	Working on this
• Integrate Fiber construction with the Roads Program – focus on Streets without fiber that already have underground electric	Planning	High	Town Staff	Working on this

CITIZEN PETITION: SOLAR ROOFTOP BYLAW

ARTICLE 30. To see if the Town will vote to adopt the following bylaw requiring integrated solar rooftop systems on all newly constructed Town buildings: Town of Concord, Massachusetts SOLAR ROOFTOP BYLAW All new public buildings constructed by the Town shall include rooftop solar in their design and construction. The intent is to pursue a strategy of single, integrated bids for the design, and construction of new buildings, which minimize duplicative efforts by multiple town departments. As such, these systems are built-out at time of initial constructions, as opposed to separate, post-construction implementation.

- Applies to electrified buildings which can support a solar capacity of 7.500kW or greater.
- Includes both Concord Public Schools (CPS) and town-government buildings.
- Systems shall be 'behind-the-meter' and will not directly involve the Concord Municipal Light Plant, except as required by CMLP policy.
- To the extent possible, consistent with financial objectives, these rooftop systems should be designed to blend seamlessly with the building's architecture, serving as both functional and aesthetic elements of the exterior.
- The Select Board shall include a reference to this bylaw in the charge to all future Town Building Committees (School and Town Buildings)
- Exceptions to this bylaw may be granted by the Town of Concord Select Board.

This policy implements a recommendation from the Solar Implementation Task Force 2024 final report that all new Town and School buildings include rooftop solar as an integral component of the building design and panels are included in the primary construction bidding process. Using new municipal rooftops helps Concord achieve its sustainability goal of up to 20MW of solar generation on Town owned property. It will reduce operating costs and is consistent with Concord's aim of minimizing the carbon footprint of public buildings. Financial payback without any subsidies is expected to be 6-8 years based on current construction costs and CMLP rate structure.

Article Sponsor	Dean Banfield, Citizen Petitioner
Article Motion	<p>Mr. Banfield moves that the Town urge the Select Board to adopt a policy requiring integrated solar rooftop systems on all newly constructed Town buildings substantially as follows:</p> <p>Solar Rooftop Policy All new public buildings constructed by the Town shall include rooftop solar in their design and construction. The intent is to pursue a strategy of single, integrated bids for the design, and construction of new buildings, which minimize duplicative efforts by multiple town departments. As such, these systems are built-out at time of initial constructions, as opposed to separate, post-construction implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies to electrified buildings which can support a solar capacity of 7.500kW or greater. • Includes both Concord Public Schools (CPS) and town government buildings. • Systems shall be 'behind-the-meter' and will not directly involve the Concord Municipal Light Plant, except as required by CMLP policy. • To the extent possible, consistent with financial objectives, these rooftop systems should be designed to blend seamlessly with the building's architecture, serving as both functional and aesthetic elements of the exterior. • The Select Board shall include a reference to this bylaw in the charge to all future Town Building Committees (School and Town Buildings) • Exceptions to this bylaw may be granted by the Town of Concord Select Board.
Article Webpage	https://concordma.gov/4173/Article-30---Citizen-Petition-Solar-Roof
Board Recommendation	<p>Climate Action Committee: Affirmative Action</p> <p>Public Works Commission: No Action as originally written in the Warrant</p> <p>Select Board: Affirmative Action: 4-1</p>