



# TOWN OF CONCORD MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

ELECTRIC | WATER | SEWER | TELECOMMUNICATIONS

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## May 2024 – Broadband Updates

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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](mailto:broadband@concordma.gov) should you have any questions, concerns, or feedback.

### Operations

We are excited about the prospect of adding a new Internet Service Provider (ISP) to our current compliment of bandwidth providers. Concord Broadband currently contracts three separate ISPs for redundancy, and we are looking at a new provider to replace one of our more expensive providers. Notably this new contract would allow for “burstable” bandwidth, which would mean we’d pay for a fixed amount but could access additional bandwidth if our subscribers needed it.

Our Broadband Manager has been methodically creating business accounts for all of our service ONTs so they can be tracked and managed on our new cloud operations platform. During power outages last month, it was incredibly helpful to have this functionality to better understand the impacted area since not all advanced meters are installed yet.

### Residential Retrofit Program

From the Massachusetts Broadband Institute’s (MBI) website:

*The Residential Retrofit Program is to deploy state of the art broadband infrastructure at approximately 22,000 Public & Affordable Housing properties across Massachusetts. MBI intends to increase low-income residents’ opportunity to access high-quality, reliable, and affordable broadband service in their homes by addressing deficient wiring and infrastructure through grants for the deployment of fiberoptic cabling to the unit to qualified Internet Service Providers (ISP’s) who will install, own, and maintain equipment.*

Our Broadband Manager Dale Hartling has been in touch with the MBI, attended webinars and prepared quotes for the work required to get high-speed Concord Broadband service to our low-income housing.

Unfortunately, the MBI announced earlier in June that they were limiting the scope of the first eligible areas that doesn’t include Concord. (The full list can be found [here](#).)

We have been told they are going to expand the program, so we will continue to prepare our submission so that when we are eligible, we will be ready. The current price to expand Broadband in these areas exceeds \$300,000.

For more information on this program, visit this site: <https://broadband.masstech.org/retrofit>

### Upcoming Maintenance

No scheduled service-impacting maintenance is planned for the month of June.

We continue to test our next-generation equipment to prepare for future procurement and projects.

You can learn more about maintenance windows here:

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

## Dark Fiber

Many people might not know this, but Concord Broadband leases dark fiber to several customers small and large. Some are medium or large business; others are government agencies or carriers that resell access to entities outside of Concord that either terminate in town or pass through.

Concord Broadband is also exploring the option of leasing dark fiber outside of town to get us closer to a regional hub, like Boston, where bandwidth rates are incredibly cheaper than they are here.

As customers request more higher-speed plans and consume more data, it will be more economical to scale if we have a direct connection to a datacenter in a hub. We continue to explore new ways to provide competitive rates and speeds.

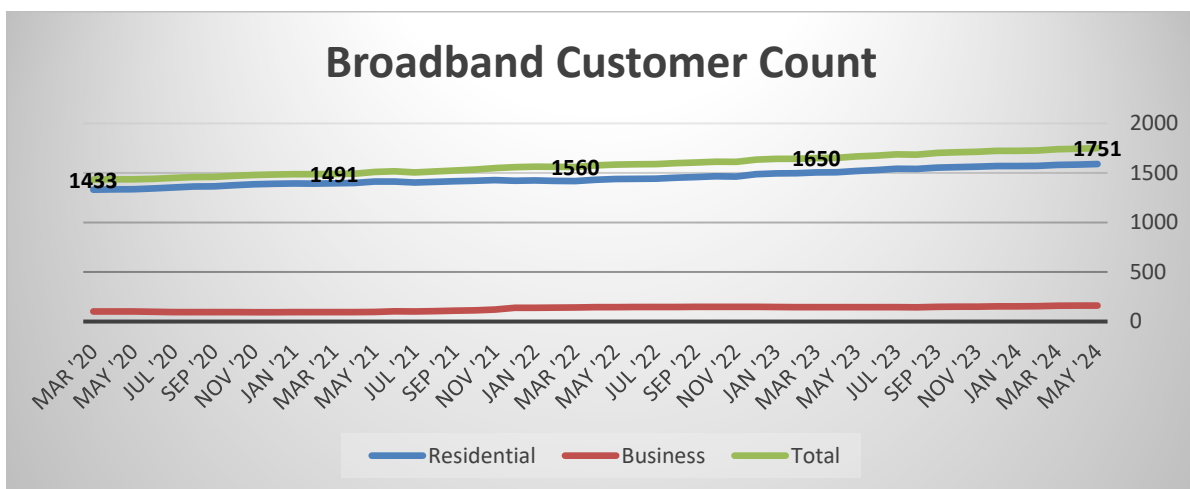
## Affordable Connectivity Program

There is still no identified funding of the Affordable Connectivity Program and the program is closed to new applicants.

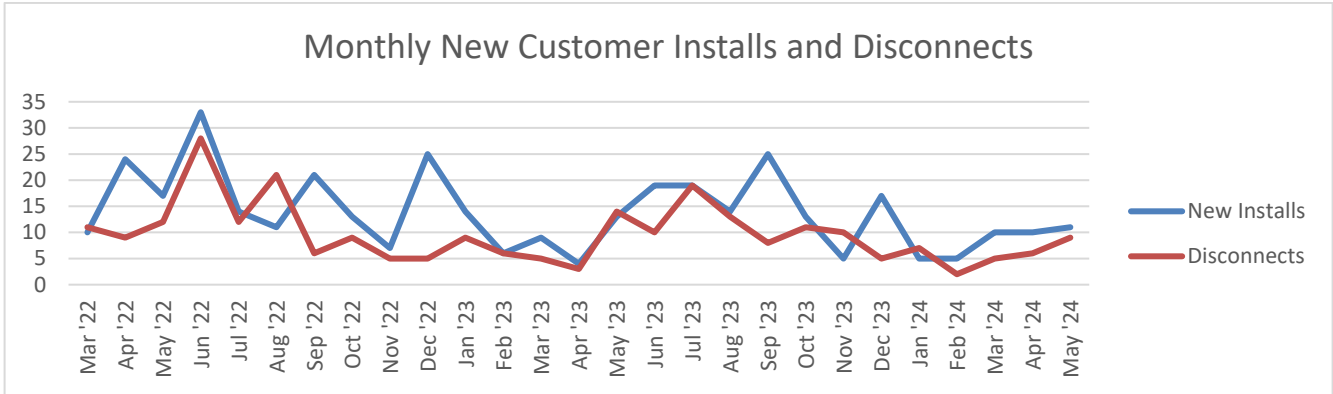
The Light Board has approved a flat \$20 per month credit for any customer that is eligible for the electric rate assistance program. We have identified those customers and are finishing up installing the credit as a miscellaneous charge, and soon our software provider will have completed the process of adding a line for the charge on bills. Customers will soon be notified that their credit has gone into effect.

To wrap up this change, we will be contacting electric customers who are on the rate assistance plan but currently do not have Concord Broadband service to let them know of the new discount. No one has to fill out any additional forms to receive this credit, and if they have questions, they can reach out at (978) 318-3101.

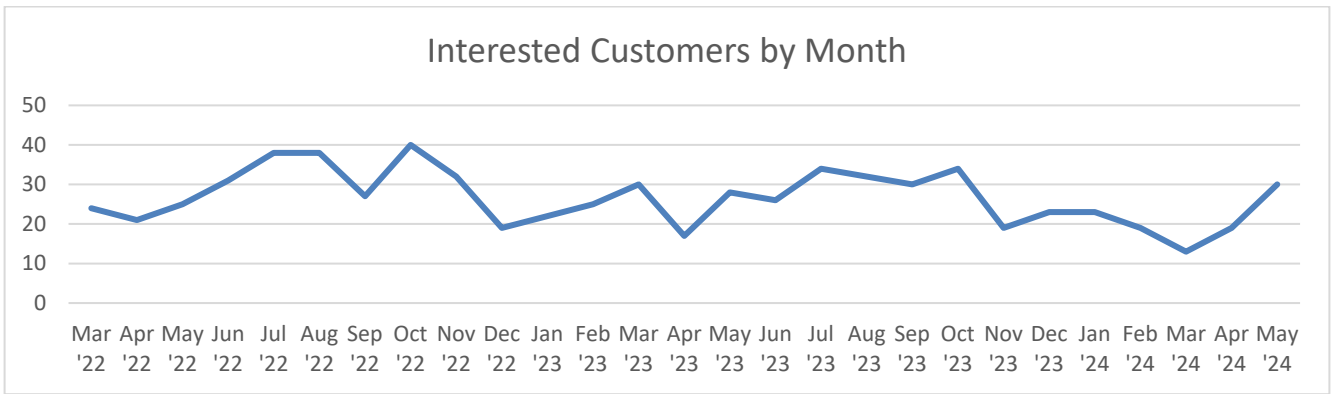
## Monthly Metrics and Business Data



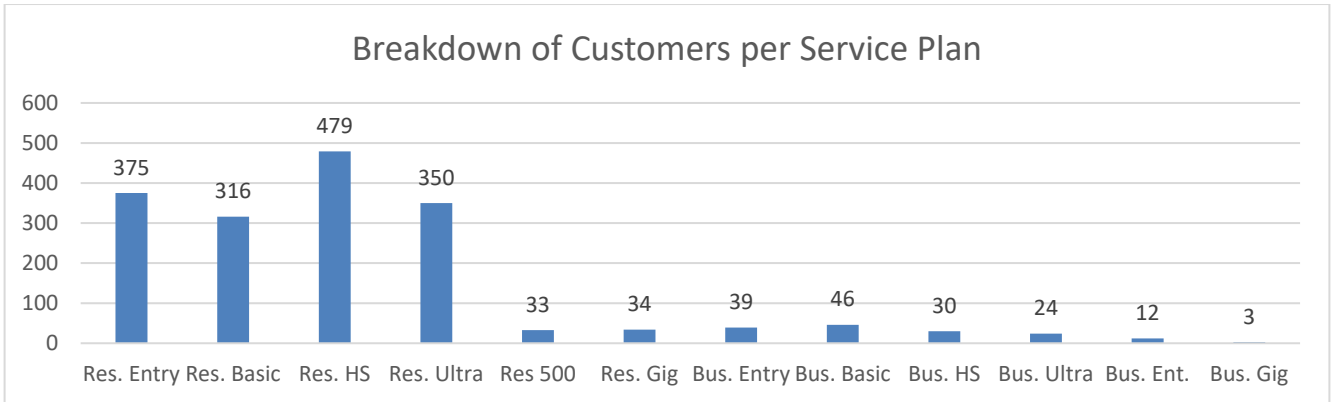
(Customer count: March 2020 – May 2024)



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

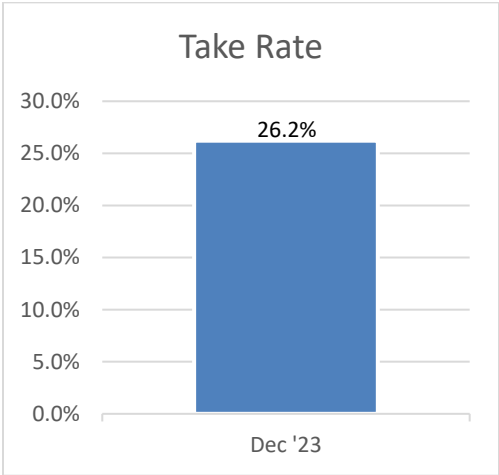
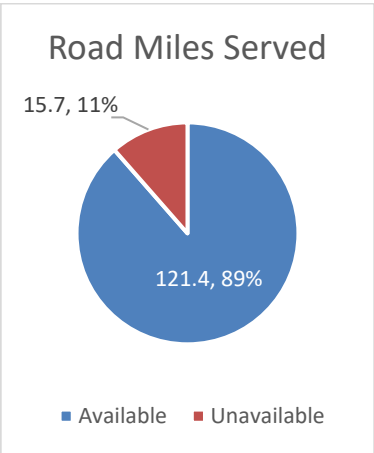
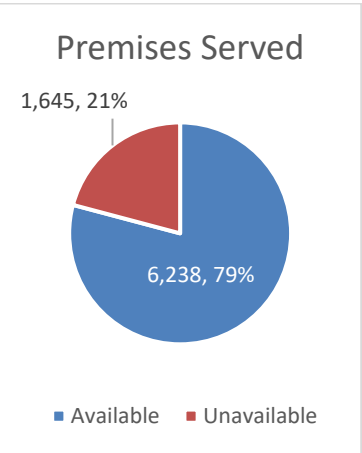
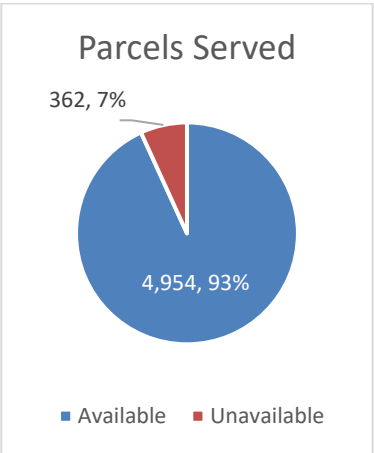


*(This is the number of individuals who submit the Broadband interest form, whether they are in the current service area or not.)*



*(This is the number of each customer on our different service plans as of 5/31/2024.)*

Other Metrics



(As of 12/1/2023)

## Appendix

### Fiber Broadband Completion Task Force's Draft Report Goals

Goal	Type	Priority	Responsible Party	Additional Info.
<b>Policies (p.39)</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Universal Access</li> </ul>	Policy	Highest	Select Board/Town Meeting	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expansion outside current territory</li> </ul>	Policy	Low	Select Board/Town Meeting	Conversations happening
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support Economic Vitality, Sustainability, Equity &amp; Inclusion</li> </ul>	Policy	High	Select Board/Light Board/TM Economic Development	Rate subsidy planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordable Housing</li> </ul>	Policy	Medium	Select Board/Housing Groups	Rate subsidy planned; working on Concord Housing Authority properties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Safety</li> </ul>	Policy	Medium	Select Board/Town Manager	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education</li> </ul>	Policy	Medium	Select Board/School Dept.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government Access (PEG)</li> </ul>	Policy	Medium	Select Board/PAAC	
<b>Recommended metrics for tracking (p.41)</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parcels served</li> </ul>	Metric	Medium	Town Staff/Light Board	Complete; will report quarterly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Premises served</li> </ul>	Metric	Medium	Town Staff/Light Board	Complete; will report quarterly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Road miles served</li> </ul>	Metric	Medium	Town Staff/Light Board	Complete; will report quarterly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subscribers</li> </ul>	Metric	High	Town Staff/Light Board	Complete; will report monthly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take rate</li> </ul>	Metric	Medium	Town Staff/Light Board	Complete; will report quarterly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Churn</li> </ul>	Metric	High	Town Staff/Light Board	Complete; included in monthly report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Installations</li> </ul>	Metric	Highest	Town Staff/Light Board	Complete; will report monthly
<b>Governance (p.39)</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track progress against completion</li> </ul>	Metric	Highest	Light Board/Town Staff	We have been cleaning up the Master Address Table and will have something new to report soon. (3/2024)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rate of return policy</li> </ul>	Policy	High	Light Board/Town Staff	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial goals with regular reporting</li> </ul>	Policy	High	Light Board/FinCom	Working on this
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retained earnings and reserve policy</li> </ul>	Policy	High	Light Board/FinCom	

Goal	Type	Priority	Responsible Party	Additional Info.
<b>Strategic Planning Goals (p.43)</b>				
• Marketing and growth	Metric	High	Light Board/Town Staff	
• Business return	Policy	High	Light Board/Town Staff	Working on this
<b>Budgeting Process for Fiber Expansion (p.41)</b>				
• 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
<b>Capital Planning Process (p.42)</b>				
• 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	
<b>Construction and Logistics (p.42)</b>				
• 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