



TOWN OF CONCORD MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

ELECTRIC | WATER | SEWER | TELECOMMUNICATIONS

February 2025 – 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 Broadband team are reviewing resumes for the Network Engineer position. To date we have received 140 applications.

The last few weeks were spent finalizing the specifications for our XGS-PON bid. We hope to have this advertised soon and procured as described in Chapter 164.

The team has spent some of the bad weather days working to improve Wi-Fi in municipal buildings, which helps both employees and the public.

As the advanced metering project is nearing wrap-up, we have been working to allow connectivity to the IP-Link meters installed in some locations. Recently another ISP with the same equipment in use in Concord provided details of how they set up their system, so hopefully we can emulate some of their settings to allow for connectivity.

Providing more accurate information to customers

When a potential broadband customer reaches out to indicate they would like our service, they fill out a form that begins with them providing their address. If the address is set as “available” in the database, they can fill out the form indicating what level of service they want as if they are signing up. If the address is “unavailable,” they can let us know they are interested when the fiber is installed in their area.

But within the “available” segment, there are a series of variables that might affect the timeliness or cost of their installation. For example, they may live on a busy street that requires a police detail, they may be in an area where the underground fiber passes through the electrical system and requires a line crew to assist, or they may require conduit to be installed from the fiber in the street to their house.

For customers who expect that they will be able to sign up and have an installation in the next few days, this can be a frustrating experience from the moment they see the word “available.”

Upcoming Maintenance

There are no maintenance windows currently scheduled.

Concord Broadband typically schedules maintenance windows from 1-4am on Saturday or Sunday to minimize the impact to customers.

Learn more on our maintenance page here:

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

To solve this problem, staff have spent an enormous amount of time reviewing locations around town to add additional attributes to those address locations. These flags will be able to paint a more accurate picture and give additional guidance at the time the form is filled out.

We also hope to have more regular communication with customers so that if there are any delays in installation, they are aware of them and can make decisions on how to get their internet service.

These new changes should debut in the next few months. We will highlight the differences in a future Broadband update.

Federal Broadband Policy Shifts: What It Means for Our Community

Recent changes to federal broadband funding policies may impact how and when high-speed internet reaches underserved areas – including those in our service territory. Our team is closely monitoring these developments to ensure we maximize opportunities for broadband expansion while maintaining reliable, high-quality service for all customers.

What's Changing?

The U.S. Department of Commerce's Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program, which allocated \$42.45 billion for broadband infrastructure, is shifting toward a more "technology-neutral" approach. Initially, fiber-optic networks were the priority, but recent changes may allow satellite internet providers to compete for federal funding. This adjustment is aimed at speeding up deployment, particularly in rural areas where fiber construction can be more complex.

How Could This Affect Our Community?

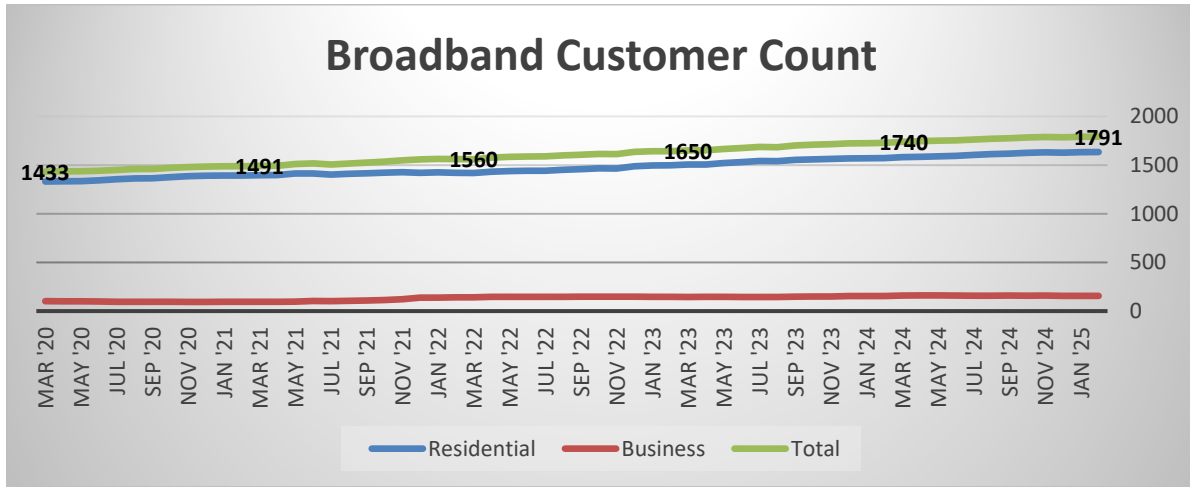
While satellite internet can provide quicker installation, fiber-optic networks remain the gold standard for reliability, speed, and long-term cost-effectiveness. Expanding eligibility for satellite services could lead to increased competition for federal funds and potentially impact the rollout of fiber-based broadband projects in some regions. Additionally, state broadband offices may need to adjust their plans, which could result in delays.

Our Commitment to Broadband Expansion

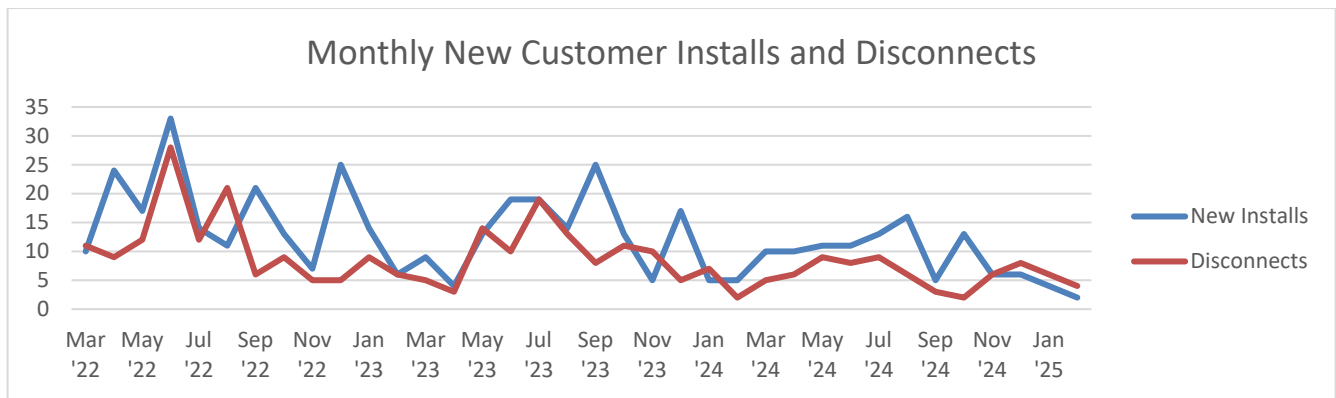
Despite these federal shifts, our focus remains on bringing fast, affordable, and dependable internet to all potential customers in our service area. We are actively engaging with state and federal agencies to advocate for solutions that prioritize quality and long-term sustainability.

We'll continue to monitor and adapt to these changes, keeping you informed every step of the way. Stay tuned for updates in future months!

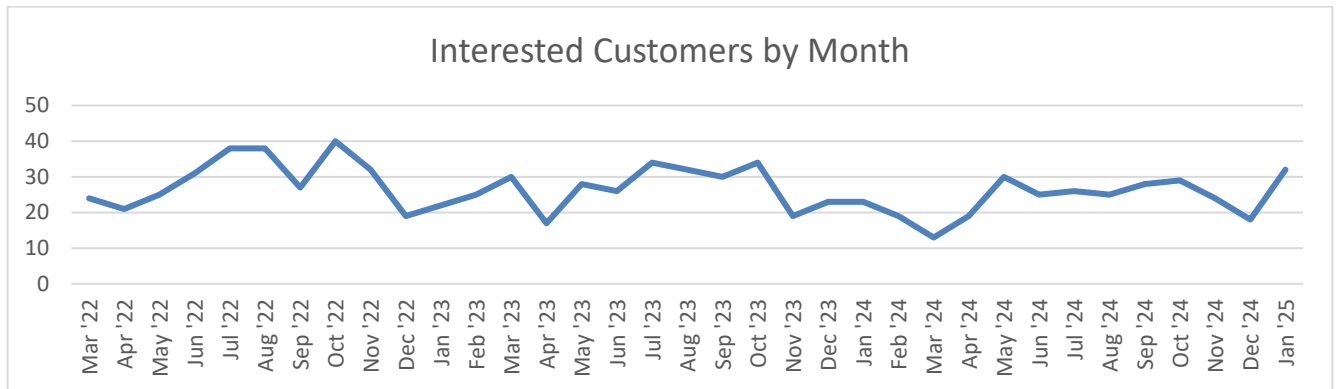
Monthly Metrics and Business Data



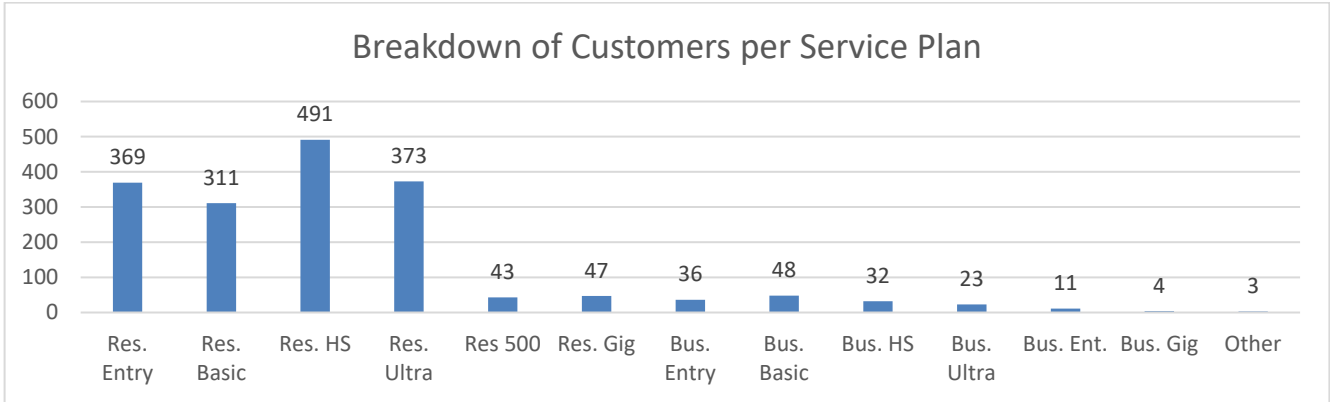
(Customer count: March 2020 – February 2025)



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

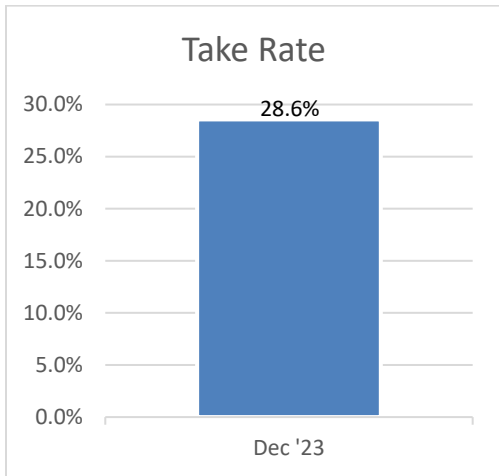
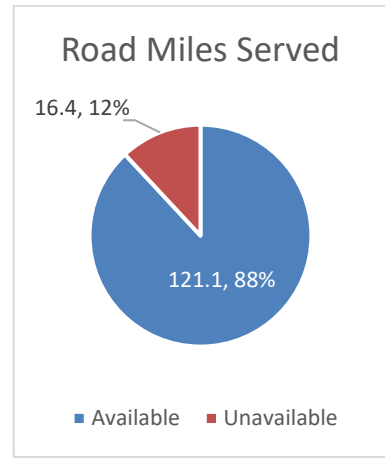
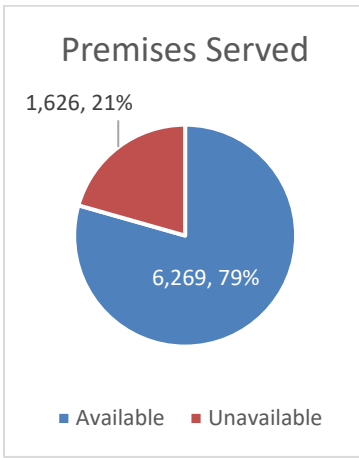
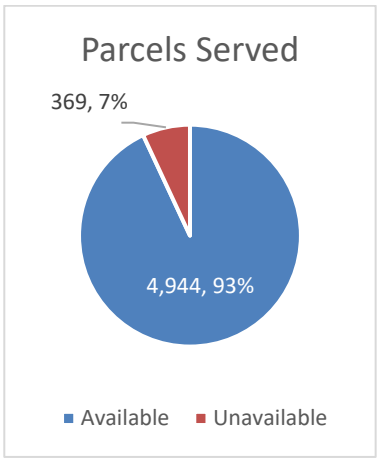


(This is the number of individuals who submit the Broadband interest form, whether they are in the current service area or not.)



(This is the number of each customer on our different service plans as of 2/28/2025.)

Other Metrics



(As of 2/15/2025)

Appendix

Fiber Broadband Completion Task Force's Report Goals

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