



TOWN OF CONCORD MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

ELECTRIC | WATER | SEWER | TELECOMMUNICATIONS

August 2022 – 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

On July 21, 2022, the Personnel Board approved changing the title “Telecom Director” to “Broadband Manager,” and the position has been posted until it is filled. We have received a few applications so far, and due to the lower number of applicants have begun discussing alternative recruitment strategies. The Town has worked with several recruiters and staffing agencies, and we are considering which option will be best for this position should the applicants to date not move forward in the process.

July was a difficult staffing month since we had two individuals out for medical reasons and an individual out on a 10-day vacation. Still, the staff were amazingly productive troubleshooting customer issues and installing new customers. We have new coolers to travel with the Telecom Technicians to help them keep water cold during the incredibly high temperatures of late.

Network Services

Upgrades and Updates

Concord Broadband has procured new routers and core switches that will be located at CMLP’s Main Street substation. This equipment is typically rotated every 5 years, which ensures we have the latest security features and reliable hardware. The current equipment there was manufactured in early- and mid-2017.

While the supply chain shortages may impact our ability to get the equipment immediately, the lead times provided by our vendor has been weeks, not months.

The new equipment has a maximum routing speed of 400GB/s, which is up from 20GB/s in our current equipment. We anticipate a useful life of 4-5 years and expect to see an annual savings since the ongoing licensing and maintenance is cheaper.

We are also replacing the DC power equipment for our Calix gear at the Main Street substation. This work will be performed in late August or early September, and while it should not impact customer service at all, we will advertise a maintenance window just in case. This gear adds a level of resilience in the event of a power interruption in the building.

Maintenance

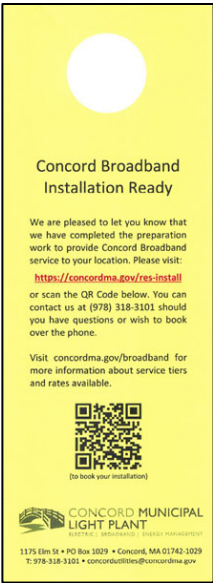
The fiber splicing that was to take place in July was postponed by our vendor. The original estimate of 2 nights was deemed to be inadequate, so we will be scheduling this for later August or September.

We did take the opportunity of the scheduled maintenance window to move to our new Broadband DNS servers co-located at Substation 223. The work was performed at 1am on Wednesday, July 28th.

We have a dedicated maintenance page on the Town’s website:

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

New Way to Schedule an Install



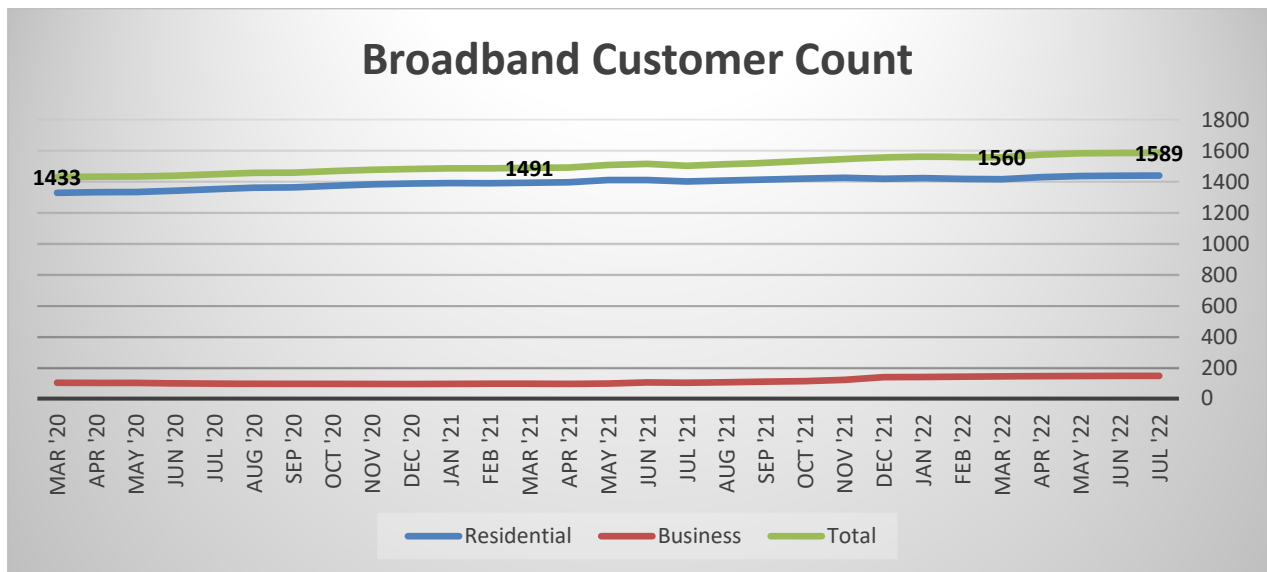
Customers have been looking for more convenient ways of booking and managing appointments. A couple months ago, we allowed potential customers to schedule their walk-throughs online, and it has been wildly popular, with over 90% of interested parties later booking an in-person visit through this online platform. We now have begun allowing residential customers to book their installation appointments online through a portal as well. Telecom Technicians have door hangers that are left at customers’ homes once the final outside work is completed, and they are notified via email the following day if they haven’t yet scheduled the work to be done.

This system sends reminders to both the potential customer and the installer before the upcoming appointment, and users of the system can reschedule or cancel, which greatly reduces the administrative burden on employees.

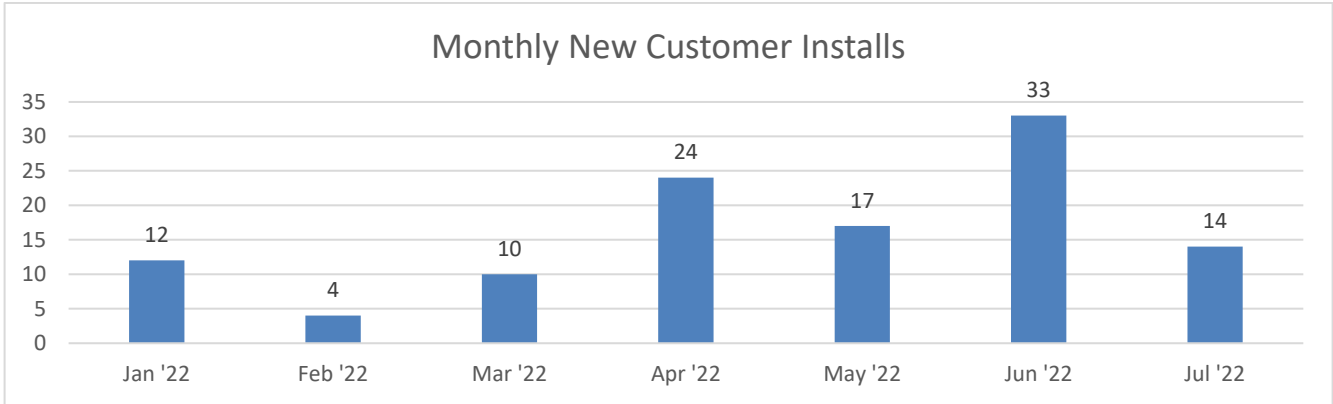
We will roll out the same program for business customers in the next few weeks.

If people have feedback on the program, please feel free to reach out to broadband@concordma.gov.

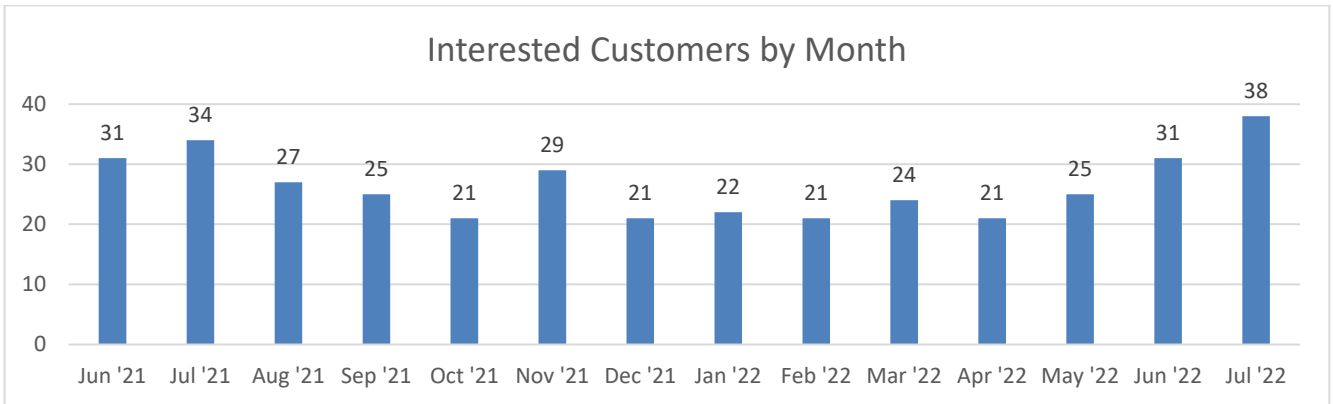
Metrics and Business Data



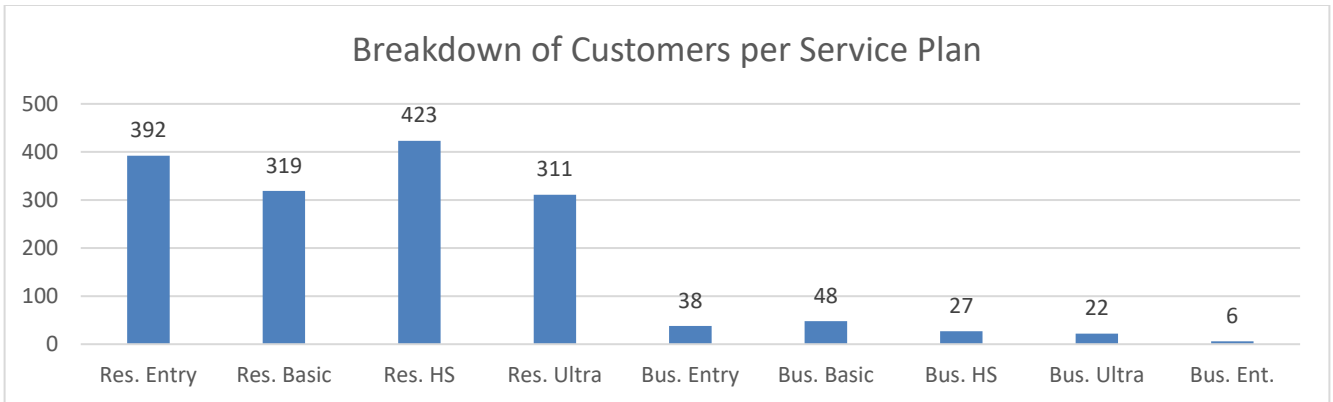
(Customer count: March 2020 – July 2022)



(The number of new installations completed each month)



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



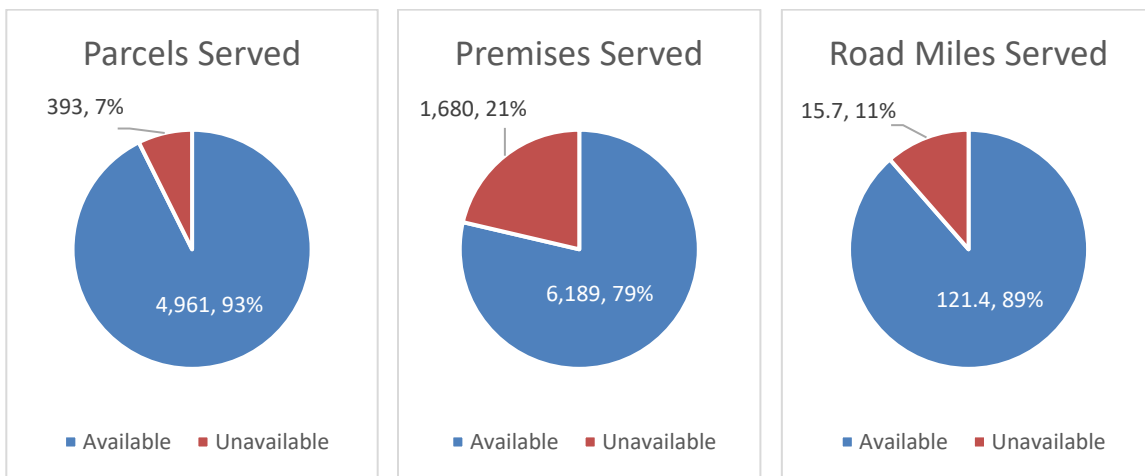
(This is the number of each customer on our different service plans as of 7/31/2022.)

Regarding metrics, we have three additional metrics to report in August of 2022: parcels served, premises served, and road miles served.

Going forward, these will be presented quarterly, but we will include them here since they weren't ready for the July update.

We are also working to differentiate the classification of "Availability" into four categories:

1. Service that is available today with the only requirement that we connect an ONT (Optical Network Terminal) in the premise
2. Service that is available with the requirement that we pull and splice fiber to the premise so the ONT can be connected
3. Service that is available but with a requirement that the home or business owners have work done to install underground conduit (or other make-ready work at their expense) before fiber can be pulled and spliced to the premise so the ONT can be connected.
4. Service that is unavailable because Concord Broadband lacks infrastructure in that area to provide service



(As of 6/30/2022)

We are working to classify this data in our Master Address Table, including an effective date for availability. This will enable us to report on quarterly progress of expanding the network.

Marketing

Internal staff have met several times to discuss services offered by Concord Broadband, and what could be adjusted to remain competitive and maintain customer satisfaction. A presentation on this matter is scheduled to be discussed at the August 17, 2022 Light Board meeting.

We have worked with our billing vendor to identify a history report that identifies premises that have once had Concord Broadband service but do not currently have service today. This list totals 451 locations, and we plan to reach out to these locations via mail to let them know that their premise is currently wired for service. The list will

probably shrink once we review for vacancies, demolitions, pending connects, and other factors. We are hopeful to discuss changes to the installation fees for these repeat customers that might make the service more attractive.

Future Projects and Things to Note

- Responses to the RPF for Helpdesk services for Concord Broadband are due on Friday, August 19, 2022. In early August we hosted a question-and-answer session and had two participants. We expect to have more details to present at the September Light Board meeting.

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	
• Affordable Housing	Policy	Medium	Select Board/Housing Groups	
• 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	Working on this
• Churn	Metric	High	Town Staff/Light Board	Working on this
• 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	
• 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	
• Review/Confirm Internal Loan Findings	Finance	Highest	Financial Audit Comm/Staff	
• Review and Rescind PILOF to MMN	Finance	High	Select Board/Town Manager	
Capital Planning Process (p.42)				
• Review/Revise Debt financing schedule	Policy	Highest	Light Board/Town Staff	
• Quantifying cost of expansion	Planning	Medium	Town Staff	
• 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