



BROADBAND FAQ's **From the Chebeague Island Broadband Committee**



How is this proposal different from the broadband vote that failed in 2019?

1. This plan will be paid for with grant money and user fees, not town tax money.
2. The Town will borrow part of the cost using low-interest municipal funding which will be re-paid by the Internet supplier, not by taxpayers

Why do we need fiber-optic lines? My DSL works fine.

1. DSL speeds vary around the island. It depends how far away your house is from the distribution point on the island. Some people have sufficient speed and some people have unusable or poor speed, yet everyone pays the same rate.
2. DSL gets slower for everyone as more people use the system.
3. With fiber, your distance from the distribution point does not affect your speed, nor does the number of people using the system affect your speed.
4. The copper-wire infrastructure that supports DSL is antiquated and failing and will be very expensive to replace and maintain when that becomes necessary.

Why do we need fiber-optic? 5G is Coming.

1. 5G is only initially available in densely populated urban areas. It may be at least ten years until it's available to rural areas like Chebeague.
2. 5G speed is limited depending on location and distance from multiple 5G towers.
3. 5G suffers from building and natural structure interference.

I have satellite internet, or why shouldn't I consider a new satellite system instead?

1. Latency* and weather interruptions are problematic.
2. Initial cost is much higher than land-based systems.
3. If you are happy with your satellite, you can keep it and not subscribe to the new system, but many people have problems with service during bad weather.
4. Your satellite needs a good line-of-site to a low point on the horizon. This can be affected by weather, trees, and other houses.
5. And like DSL, the more people who use it, the slower the service the service gets.

What will it cost me?

1. We are working to keep the monthly fees around \$50/month, which is comparable to the current DSL rates. Faster speeds will be available for a premium rate.

What kind of speed can I expect?

1. Standard service will be 50-megabits upload and download.
2. 100-megabits upload and download will cost a little more.
3. Current DSL speeds on the island range from less than 1 to 6-megabits download and 1-megabit upload.

4. 50-megabits will be more than enough for the average user. Higher speeds may be useful for some business applications.

What is download and upload?

1. Download happens when you receive an email, or watch a movie using an online service, or download software or games to use on your computer.
2. Upload happens when you send an email, post pictures on Facebook, send a file from your computer, or participate in a video chat or conference.

What can I do with higher speeds?

1. Improved videoconferencing like Zoom and Skype and other high bandwidth work applications
2. Telemedicine visits
3. Home monitoring (smoke, oil, thermostat, waterline)
4. Entertainment like movies and music
5. Remote schoolwork when necessary
6. Notices and updates from businesses, government and banking.
7. More simultaneous users per household
8. Future applications as they evolve

What happens if I need a repair?

1. The Broadband Supplier is obligated to make repairs ASAP, and these will be facilitated by a local technician.

What happens if the Broadband Supplier goes out of business?

1. Since the Town owns the fiber cabling, any other company can step in and use this same infrastructure.

Will there be a contract with the Broadband Supplier?

1. Yes. We are planning to have a long-term contract with the supplier, after which we can negotiate a new contract based upon their performance and pricing from new competitors.

What is broadband?

1. Broadband means any high-speed internet access that is much faster than dial-up access or traditional DSL services.

Can good broadband help my poor cell-phone reception on the island?

1. Yes. Most newer cell-phones have a "wi-fi calling" feature that lets you connect your phone calls and text messages using the wi-fi in your house instead of using your cell phone service. With good broadband it doesn't matter how bad your cell phone reception is. You also save on your cell phone bill if you are paying by the minute or by data usage since you won't use any while within your house's wifi reception area.

Isn't the federal government giving away money for this?

1. Yes. It will help with the overall cost of installing the fiber to every house on the island. The money is distributed to each state, so we are applying to the Maine state government for grants.

Can I get rid of Direct TV/Dish if I have broadband?

1. Yes! With broadband you can access a lot of TV and movie services through your internet connection.

* Latency is the amount of time a data signal travels from point A to point B, then returns round trip to point A. If your latency is around 1000ms (1 sec) or higher, it will result in continuous buffering of videos and the overall experience running incredibly slowly.