



Why has the County decided to enter into the broadband business which is mostly private industry?

Since the early 2000s, Clearwater County Council has been advocating to all levels of government for improved connectivity in our rural landscape. Many studies have revealed that in order to stay competitive and attract growth, a municipality needs to invest in itself to prevent population and economic development decline. Broadband is a long-term investment for the future of County residents and businesses to gain resiliency for a successful future.

Project updates will be posted on the County's broadband web page at www.clearwatercounty.ca/broadband as they become available.

Will the County's broadband network enable Internet Service Providers to improve and expand service?

The broadband network being implemented by the County is intended to expand core backbone infrastructure into rural and remote areas that are unserved and/or under-served. The County will provide broadband infrastructure within proximity to users, while Telecommunication providers will have the opportunity to provide Internet connectivity directly to customers. Investments in broadband infrastructure from Telecommunication providers will only serve to enhance coverage and capacity in the region.

How did the County determine the phasing of the broadband project?

In October 2020, Clearwater County Council approved the Core Backbone Broadband Internet Plan 2020-2025, which included the prioritization of routes and timelines. The selection of the initial route to Ferrier Acres as the first phase was partially due to the potential awarding of a Connect to Innovate (CTI) grant by the federal government. In addition, the route also presented favourable conditions to test potential implementation, costing models and services on a small scale prior to additional phases.

The second phase from Rocky Mountain House to Olds is essential to provide a low-cost, highly scalable wholesale Internet connection that will enable the County to act independently of major service providers and exert cost control. The route is a critical step in ensuring affordable connection rates for Telecommunication providers and mobile companies in the area.

Information has been presented to Council about the sequencing of phases including grant funding opportunities, public consultation initiatives, Internet connectivity costs and feedback from both small and large Telecommunication providers. Project sequencing is determined by Clearwater County Council and is subject to change.



Is there a risk that later phases will not get funded?

All project decisions are subject to the discretion of Clearwater County Council.

What is the status of the Ferrier Acres Pilot Project?

Fibre-optic cable has been deployed from Rocky Mountain House through to Ferrier Drive and is ready for service. An expression of interest has been release to telecommunication providers.

The RMH Historical site remains on trial and working well according to staff on site. Woodlands Crs. trial was placed on hold and awaiting authorization from the Broadband Committee.

When will the fibre-optic network and related services be available in the Ferrier Acres area?

Existing telecommunication providers serving the area could leverage the County's broadband infrastructure to increase or improve their service offering. As of December 2023, three of the six project phase routes have been completed; Nordegg, Ferrier Acres, Olds. Service is ready to be implemented on these 3 initial routes.

Does the County have a pricing model for residential and commercial users?

The Broadband Committee has an approved business plan which includes the price list for telecommunication providers (available on the County's broadband web page).

Residential prices will be set by telecommunication providers.

How will residents be notified of ongoing progress?

The County will provide information regarding the progress of the project and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) through the broadband web page at www.clearwatercounty.ca/broadband. Other channels of communication include the County Highlights Newsletter, Social Media, and Podcasts.

Will the County's broadband network become obsolete due to the Starlink satellite system?

Fibre-optic broadband infrastructure will not become obsolete due to advances in satellite technology for several decades, if at all. Furthermore, the fibre-optic network has the potential to support Starlink's system of low-orbiting satellites. Starlink has expressed interest in the County's broadband project and discussions remain ongoing. While satellite-based service will be cost-prohibitive for many, the technology could provide Internet connectivity to residents in the most remote areas of the County's 18,000 square kilometres of sprawling wilderness.



Why was O-Net (an Internet service provider owned and operated by the Town of Olds) selected as a project partner?

O-Net was part of a bundled group of services selected, initially, for the Ferrier project only. Rigstar has been selected to replace O-Net as the County's primary Network Operator to cover all phases and services due to their deep overall capabilities.

How is the County going to work with Telecommunication providers?

The County will engage Telecommunication providers by helping to facilitate necessary requirements to improve their service or expand into new networks. Collaboration with Telecommunication providers will be guided by the County's Broadband Telecommunications Open Access, which establishes the terms under which the County and Telecommunication providers will cooperate.

Are existing Telecommunication providers in the area supportive of the project?

While the County cannot speak for the entirety of Telecommunication providers in the area, many Telecommunication providers have contacted the County expressing their support for the project and look forward to the opportunities of improved broadband infrastructure using the County's high quality and state of the art network.

We are currently with a major telecommunications provider. Will the broadband project improve connection speeds?

The County's broadband network will enable any telecommunication providers to improve their services and provide high-capacity connectivity at a cost that minimizes interconnection prices for the customer. It will also reduce the risk of service disruptions with the addition of fibre-optic routes to major Internet hubs.



Will Internet connectivity be delivered through wireless towers or fibre-optic cable?

Depending on geographic obstacles, proximity to broadband infrastructure and pricing options offered by Telecommunication providers, Internet connectivity will be delivered by Telecommunication providers through either fibre-optic cable, wireless towers or a combination of both.

What Telecommunication providers will be participating in the County's broadband network?

The County will be meeting with existing Telecommunication providers in the coming months to explore options for improving and expanding service availability through the County's broadband network. Information about participating Telecommunication providers will be made available at the County's broadband web page at www.clearwatercounty.ca/broadband.

Will broadband infrastructure support future development in the County?

Existing businesses are seeing an increasing need for access to high-speed Internet connectivity to provide products and services, secure access to markets and maintain competitiveness. Many businesses looking to establish themselves in the County consider Internet connectivity to be as important as electricity. Access to broadband increases the attractiveness of the County to businesses, developers and potential residents.

What are the benefits of Internet connectivity for the development of Nordegg?

As the County develops the Historic Main Street in Nordegg and seeks to attract businesses to the hamlet, broadband will play an essential role. Broadband is a requirement for hotels, tour operators, other service providers, residents and visitors. The phase from Rocky Mountain House to Nordegg is now complete and ready for service.