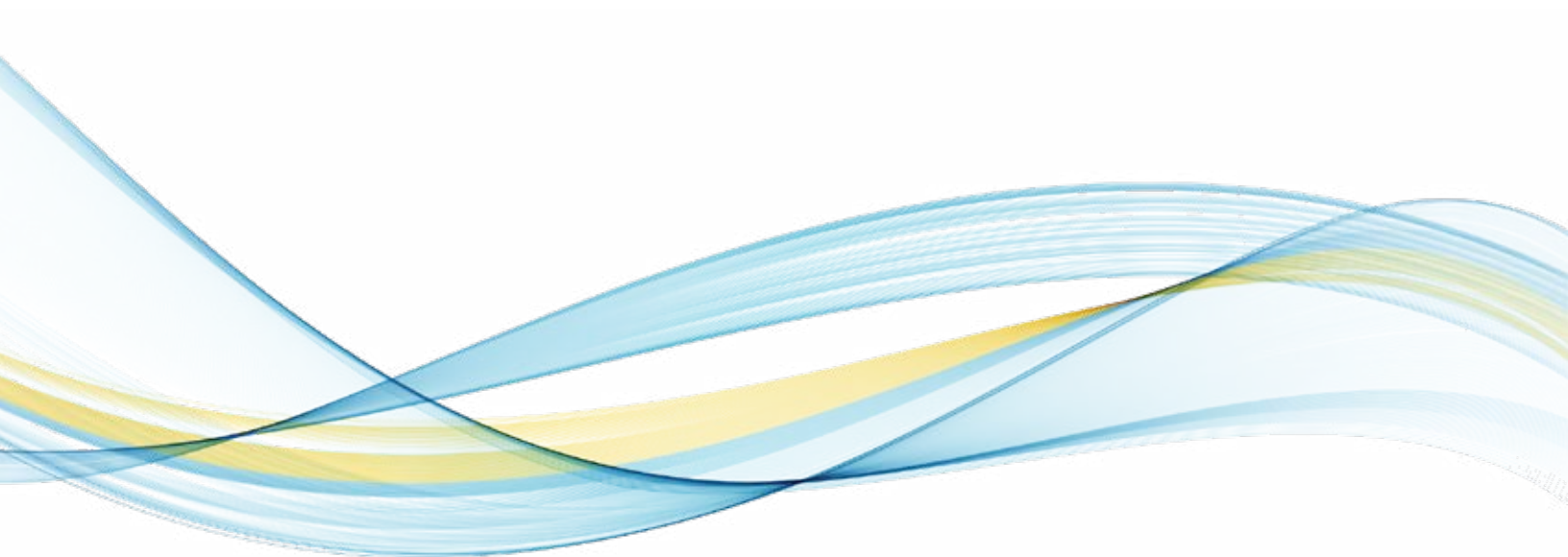


2021-2025

# Broadband Connectivity Discussion Paper



# Our Commitment

High-speed Internet is important for Islanders to access quality education, job opportunities, and essential public services. Businesses depend on high-speed to develop and grow as well as reach their markets, suppliers and customers. The importance of stable, high-speed connections has been heightened through the COVID-19 pandemic with an increase in residents working and educating from home. There have also been more and more businesses shifting to online and virtual formats.

The Government of PEI has committed to reaching 95 per cent of civic addresses by June 2023 and 100 per cent of civic addresses by 2025 with high-speed Internet (download speeds of 50 megabits per second or faster and upload speeds of 10 megabits per second or faster).

We encourage members of the public, communities, businesses, and service providers to share their feedback on the proposed actions in this document.



# Broadband on PEI

While there are over a dozen Internet Service Providers in PEI, not all civic addresses have access to high-speed. Slower speeds are primarily experienced by rural customers.

- There are almost 76,000 civic addresses across PEI
- Approximately 19,000 or 25% of civic addresses do not have access to high-speed
- Over 99% of underserved civic addresses are in rural areas of PEI

Because rural areas typically have a greater distance between addresses and can also present geographical challenges for wireless signals (e.g. tree coverage and valleys), these customers are often the most challenging and expensive to serve.

## Existing programs and projects

In recent years, government has taken steps to expand high speed coverage:

- Jointly funded federal-provincial agreements signed with Bell Canada and Xplornet Communications Inc. will bring high-speed to approximately 30,000 civic addresses through a combination of fixed wireless and Fibre-to-the-home. These projects began in 2020 and will continue to connect Islanders until 2023.
- The PEI Broadband Fund provides financial assistance for projects that enhance access and service levels. The program has various funding streams available including:
  - o Fund for Communities
  - o Fund for Businesses
  - o Fund for Internet Service Providers
  - o Accelerated Internet Service Provider Pilot Fund
  - o Residential Pilot Fund

After the completion of the projects currently funded through these two avenues, it is estimated that approximately 2,500-3,000 civic addresses will remain underserved. The proposed actions to reach these civic addresses are the focus of this strategy.

# Remaining gaps in broadband infrastructure

In 2021, Stantec Consulting Ltd. was engaged to locate high-speed services available across PEI. Through this exercise, we have mapped the civic address that will remain underserved. In some areas, the larger portions of communities, and the surrounding areas, will remain underserved. In other areas, individual civic addresses will remain underserved.

## UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

Alaska	Byrnes Road	Enmore	Long River
Annandale	Cable Head West	Five Houses	Milltown Cross
Augustine Cove	Campbellton	French River	Oyster Bed Bridge
Anglo-Tignish	Cape Egmont	Gaspereaux	Rock Barra
Arlington	Cascumpec	Granville	Seacow Pond
Beach Point	Central Kildare	Head of Cardigan	Seaview
Belle River	Clinton	Head of Montague	St. Charles
Brookvale	Dalvay	Hebron	St. Chrysostome
Burton	East Point	Launching	White Sands

## UNDERSERVED CIVICS

Bear River	East Baltic	Lot 16	Springvale
Bedeque	Eldon	Malpeque	St Lawrence
Blooming Point	Elmwood	Mill River East	Tenmile House
Brackley Beach	Emyvale	Murray Harbour	Union Road
Brooklyn	Fairview	Nail Pond	Waterford
Canoe Cove	Greenvale	New Annan	Watervale
Cavendish	Indian River	Palmer Road	West St Peters
Desable	Inkerman	Rennies Road	
Dromore	Iris	Riverdale	

By combining the coverage areas of Internet Service Providers offering high-speed, we have been able to better identify cost-effective solutions and infrastructure requirements to reach the remaining underserved communities and civic addresses. A mixture of wired, fixed wireless, and satellite technology will be used to reach underserved communities while addressing the geographical challenges of each location.

Through the PEI Broadband Fund, the Government of PEI has committed \$2 million a year until 2025 to help expand and enhance broadband connectivity. Going forward, we propose using these funds strategically to focus on connecting underserved communities and civic addresses that will not be covered by one of the existing funded projects.

## **PROPOSED ACTIONS**

1. Provide investments for high-speed service through the PEI Broadband Fund including:
  - a) Create a Fund for Accelerated Projects based on the 2020-2021 pilot to help reach underserved communities with high-speed service. This fund will accept project proposals through a call for applications process and provide higher levels of funding for projects that can be complete by the end of 2022. The launch of a call for applications would be targeted for fall 2021.
  - b) Create a Fund for Residential Access based on the 2020-2021 pilot to help reach underserved civic addresses. In addition to providing funds for residents to obtain equipment for reaching line of sight for wireless service, we propose including other services where cost-effective (e.g. satellite services like Starlink). Launch of this new stream would be targeted for fall 2021.
  - c) Explore accessibility in the Fund for Communities to support underserved communities interested in their own solutions. Changes to this stream would be targeted for fall 2021.
2. Conduct a Request for Proposals specifically targeting underserved communities not covered by other projects.
3. Perform a review of the funding streams under the PEI Broadband Fund on an annual basis.
4. Work with municipal, provincial, and federal partners to identify and leverage funding opportunities.

# Strengthen our communication with Islanders

Broadband projects require large infrastructure builds that are highly technical and multifaceted. By providing clear communication and encouraging feedback, decisions on policy and programming will be guided by Islanders. Overall, improved communication will allow the Government of PEI to establish direction for moving forward.

## **PROPOSED ACTIONS**

1. Provide clear and accurate information on the Government website through monthly updates.
2. Measure project success through annual reports including the location of areas served and the total dollar value invested.
3. Review and update the strategy every two years to reflect changes in national high-speed requirements.
4. Promote ongoing engagement through feedback on Internet availability and progress to homes or businesses through mail, phone, and email.

# Feedback

Members of the public, communities, businesses, and service providers are encouraged to share their feedback on the proposed actions in this document. The consultation process will be open for 30 days.

Feedback can be submitted in various ways:

- 1) Online at *[www.PrinceEdwardIsland.ca/broadbanddiscussion](http://www.PrinceEdwardIsland.ca/broadbanddiscussion)*
- 2) Email at *[myinternet@gov.pe.ca](mailto:myinternet@gov.pe.ca)*
- 3) Fascimile at **902-368-4242**
- 4) Mail at

Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture  
Re: Broadband Connectivity Discussion Paper  
PO Box 2000  
105 Rochford Street  
Charlottetown, PE  
C1A 7N8



2021-2025 Broadband Connectivity Discussion Paper

Department of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture

***[www.PrinceEdwardIsland.ca/InternetPlan](http://www.PrinceEdwardIsland.ca/InternetPlan)***