

Maple Broadband
2021 Annual Report
October 15, 2021

Maple Broadband is Addison County's Communications Union District (CUD). A CUD is an organization of two or more towns that join together as a municipal not-for-profit corporation to build communication infrastructure.

Maple Broadband's mission is to enhance the economic, educational, and medical well-being of the communities we serve by providing a high-speed, reliable, affordable fiber internet network to all households and businesses; supported by prompt, skilled, helpful customer service.

Our member towns include Addison, Bridport, Bristol, Cornwall, Ferrisburgh, Leicester, Lincoln, Middlebury, Monkton, New Haven, Orwell, Panton, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham, Starksboro, Vergennes, Waltham, Weybridge, and Whiting. Our Governing Board has 20 representatives appointed by Selectboards of the member towns. We have an Executive Committee and established two standing subcommittees to work on specific aspects of our operation. Meeting times, agendas and minutes are posted on our [website](#).

Since its formation in September 2020, Maple Broadband's strategic approach, outlined below, has been focused on two broad areas: Developing and building the capacity of the organization; and initiating pre-construction and construction.

Operational Development and Capacity Building

- Held weekly meetings of the Executive Committee, which is composed of members with expertise in a wide variety of professions, including: a former telecommunications design engineer; a former telecom investment banker; a former public school associate superintendent; the owner of a software development company, a telecommunications policy and implementation specialist, and the Executive Director of the Addison County Regional Planning Commission;
- Held monthly meetings of the Governing Board, which is composed of delegates and alternates, chosen by the select boards of each of the 20 member towns;
- Retained administrative and consulting services from the Addison County Regional Planning Commission;
- Engaged a website and marketing firm to help inform the community about Maple Broadband;
- Applied for over \$200,000 in capacity-building grants and have continued to explore a variety of financing options;
- Through the Vermont Community Broadband Board, applied for and were awarded \$2.3 million to cover capacity building efforts and necessary pre-construction tasks;
- Continued to receive essential support from our partners, including:
 - Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC)
 - Addison County Economic Development Corporation (ACEDC)
 - Vermont Department of Public Service (DPS)
 - Vermont Communications Union District Association (VCUDA)
 - Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB)
 - Rural Innovation Strategies, Inc. (RISI)
 - ValleyNet
 - Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT)
 - Middlebury College
- Set up organization systems (office support, accounting and bookkeeping, insurance, marketing, customer service, legal support, logo and [website](#));
- Met with every select board in our service territory to tell the Maple Broadband story, provide updates on our progress, and seek financial support in the form of town ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds;

Maple Broadband Members

Addison
Ferrisburgh
Monkton
Ripton
Vergennes

Bridport
Leicester
New Haven
Salisbury
Waltham

Bristol
Lincoln
Orwell
Shoreham
Weybridge

Cornwall
Middlebury
Panton
Starksboro
Whiting

- Engaged business groups, including the Addison County Chamber of Commerce, Addison County Economic Development Corporation, the Middlebury Rotary Club, as well as major employers such as Middlebury College and the National Bank of Middlebury;
- Formally defined our operational structure and created operational policies including [Bylaws](#), [Conflict of Interest Policy](#), [Public Relations Policy](#), [Financial Policies and Procedures](#), and [Purchasing Policy](#);
- Established an accounting platform;
- Issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an Auditor.

Network Pre-Construction and Construction

- Commissioned a [Feasibility Study](#) which concluded that our proposed operational model is both technically and financially feasible;
- Developed and issued a [Business Plan](#);
- Conducted an exhaustive RFP process and selected network engineering firm Vantage Point Solutions (VPS) to perform pre-construction tasks:
 - Completed Step 1: High-level network design;
 - Initiated Step 2: Field data collection services;
- Negotiated, executed and announced a Network Management Agreement with Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom;
- Engaged with business groups including the Addison County Chamber of Commerce, Addison County Economic Development Corporation, the Middlebury Rotary Club, and major employers like Middlebury College, to tell our story and solicit support;
- In a partnership with Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom, submitted an NTIA Broadband Infrastructure Grant which, if approved, will provide over \$8 million in funds dedicated to extending fiber broadband service to over 1,600 addresses in the Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom operating territory of Addison County; and
- Initiated a program to pre-purchase long lead-time materials now, to improve likelihood that necessary construction materials will be on hand in time to begin network construction in 2022.

The coming year will be an important one for Maple Broadband. While it is difficult to predict with certainty what our network will look like at this time next year, our path forward includes completion of pre-construction tasks, creation of construction bid specifications, and selection of a qualified cabling contractor.

In coming months, we expect to be facing significant challenges related to availability of construction labor and materials. However, we are preparing to purchase key construction materials now to mitigate this concern. Implementation of a pre-purchase program presumes we will have the funds needed to cover these purchases. Vigorous member town support in the form of ARPA donations will be an important contributor to the success of the pre-purchase program.

Submitted by Maple Broadband Governing Board:

Executive Committee: Dan Sonneborn (Bristol), Magna Dodge (Cornwall), Steve Huffaker (Ferrisburgh), Ellie Hagopian (New Haven), Nancy Cornell (Starksboro)

Treasurer: Cy Tall (Cornwall)

Governing Board: Jeff Kauffman (Addison), Dan Sonneborn (Bristol), Rick Scott (Bridport), Magna Dodge (Cornwall), Steve Huffaker (Ferrisburgh), Brad Lawes (Leicester), Kate McGowan (Lincoln), Ross Conrad (Middlebury), Mark Boltz-Robinson (Monkton), Jim Walsh (New Haven), Sandy Korda (Orwell), Howard Hall (Panton), Billy Sneed (Ripton), Paul Vaczy (Salisbury), Carl Siebecker (Shoreham), Nancy Cornell (Starksboro), Shannon Haggett (Vergennes), Andrew Martin (Waltham), Spencer Putnam (Weybridge)

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