

The Sugar Hill Broadband Committee has been meeting under the direction of Carol Miller, Director of Broadband Initiatives, the National Collaborative for Digital Equity since January 2022. The committee set a vision of high-speed, affordable, reliable, and future ready fiber to the premise broadband for all residents and businesses in town.

Sugar Hill Broadband Committee Members: Margo Connors, Doug Evelyn, Nancy Martland, Jeanne Cummings, Steve Naboicheck, Jordan Applewhite, Michael Morley, and Jason Tors.

The committee has met monthly on the 2nd Wednesday and worked through a process of decision-making regarding vision for the community, and planning for the broadband infrastructure of the future. A request for information was sent to broadband providers to collect their service coverage data which produced a set of maps by technology depicting Fiber, DSL, Cable, and all Technologies. We have attended presentations by Spectrum/Charter, Consolidated Communications, NH Electric Cooperative and Firstlight Fiber, all invited to describe their company's interest in serving Sugar Hill residents.

In April 2022, the Sugar Hill Broadband Committee held an open meeting for residents to come and see what the committee was doing. The meeting was well attended, and residents were asked to review a set of draft maps, and express concerns and opinions on what the committee had been working on to date. Aesthetics, high speed availability and capacity, and strategies were topics of discussion enabling the local feedback needed to move forward with planning efforts.

In November 2022 the committee released a Request for Proposals for a public-private partnership interested in serving Sugar Hill with a deadline in December 2022. The committee received 2 proposals: Spectrum and Consolidated Communications. We reviewed and scored the proposals for the purpose of making a recommendation and/or create a warrant article for further discussion at town meeting. The Spectrum proposal would have required town assistance to bring service to every location while the Consolidated Communications proposal stated that if they received the grant funding that there would be no cost bringing fiber to the 823 telephone exchange.

The good news is that during this time, the New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs created the Office of Broadband Initiatives in preparation for millions of federal funding that would be coming to New Hampshire for broadband expansion and adoption. Through regular updates the committee learned that the New Hampshire Electric Cooperative had secured \$50million in broadband funding and would be bringing fiber to the premise to Sugar Hill residents that were in their electric footprint. A total of 76 addresses in Sugar Hill would be served. Then, Consolidated Communications was awarded \$40 Million in broadband funding and will bring fiber to all residents in the 823 telephone exchange that serves Franconia and Sugar Hill.

We have scheduled up a combined meeting of Sugar Hill Broadband Committee and Franconia Broadband Committee with Consolidated Communications on March 23, 2023. We will be discussing what and when to expect with the deployment of fiber to the premise. We want to make sure that all of our concerns with aesthetics and community character are articulated and what if anything we can do to help Consolidated Communications meet it's requirement to serve all of Sugar Hill with a combination of grant and private funding.

We will keep working on this issue for the benefit of all residents of Sugar Hill. If you have any questions or concerns email broadband@sugarhillnh.org.