



TOWN OF READFIELD – Select Board

8 OLD KENTS HILL ROAD, READFIELD, MAINE 04355

Website: www.readfieldmaine.org

Telephone: (207) 685-4939

Internet Upgrade May Be Coming to Readfield

For more than a year your Select Board has been investigating how to provide high-speed fiber to the home for each and every residence and business in the town. We have been working with a collaborative group of six towns (Fayette, Leeds, Mount Vernon, Readfield, Vienna & Wayne) in a partnership named the Western Kennebec Lakes Community Broadband Association. In January 2020 we received a detailed analysis of the services provided and the unmet needs in each town.

Readfield currently has approximately 98% coverage for internet service either via copper-line cable or dial-up phone lines. These services provide access that ranges from great to very poor dependent upon how far the connection is from the service hub. Because we have a high percentage of availability our town will not qualify for grant funding or subsidies; those are reserved for under-served towns. Our current providers have expressed no interest in providing fiber to the home in Readfield which leaves us on our own to find a solution that provides the best service for our town.

High-speed internet networks are common across the U.S. though approximately 35% of all smaller cities and towns remain without access to high-speed and reliable fiber networks that provide easy access to online education for children and adults, Telehealth, digital commerce and the ability to work from home. Of cities/towns that seek to improve their internet services, approximately 68% have chosen to have a fully funded and operating municipal network, while 17% have funded the network but engaged a private sector commercial partner for operation and/or servicing.

Many residents have communicated with us concerning the poor connections available at their locations and have expressed the need for better service, especially given our current world situation of isolating and working and educating remotely. The Select Board is currently in the process of determining the fiscal impact of having a municipal network designed and installed in Readfield. As a piece of critical infrastructure we are looking into the best way to manage the financing, servicing, and maintenance needs of the network and plan for timely construction. We are confident that we can accomplish this in the next 12 to 18 months, pending Town Meeting approval.

In order to determine if this is the correct direction to take our town we need as much input from our residents as possible. We currently have two surveys that we are asking for you to participate in no matter what your use of the Internet is. We want to hear from everyone. This is a major utility infrastructure project equivalent to building a road system or a telephone system. We want to reach everyone and provide equal access and service all at a fair and reasonable cost. Several issues will need to be discussed and decided over the coming months prior to Town Meeting and the use of surveys will be the quickest and most reliable method to gather input given the current restrictions on physical in-person gatherings. Local support is critical to our decision making so please participate in the surveys as they become available. Links and other information can be found on the reverse side of this letter.



Town of Readfield
8 Old Kents Hill Rd.
Readfield, ME
04355

NAME
ADDRESS 1
ADDRESS 2
CITY, STATE
ZIP

Tell Us About Your Current Internet Service and How You Want it Improved.

Take the five minute survey at:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/Readfieldinternetsurvey

or find it on the Town Website at:

www.readfieldmaine.org

Your Feedback Is Important - Thank you!

Additional Links and Resources

Take the Readfield Internet Survey:

Do you have enough bandwidth for work, school, and entertainment? We know that reliable, affordable, high speed internet is becoming as important to our community as our roads and schools, but we don't know a lot about the internet service people are getting currently. Complete the survey in less than five minutes to help us understand your needs and priorities!

www.surveymonkey.com/r/Readfieldinternetsurvey

To Sign up for Email Updates on Broadband Internet in Readfield:

www.readfieldmaine.org/subscribe

See the Readfield Survey Results:

www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-WNCQXKG67

Take the State of Maine Survey:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ME_SD_BB_Impact

Visit the Western Kennebec Lakes Community Broadband Association:

www.wklcba.org