

How are high speed services provided?

Wired: Wired internet service is provided through a cable system provider using the same coaxial cables that provide TV service or provided by an internet service provider through fiber optic cables. Wired internet service by definition requires a physical connection between your home or business to routers and servers connecting you to the internet.



Wireless: A wireless router is simply a router that connects to your computer using radio waves instead of cables. It contains a very low-power radio transmitter and receiver, with a maximum range of about 300 feet, depending on what your walls are made of and what other electrical equipment is nearby. The router can send and receive Internet data to any computer in your home that is also equipped with wireless access.

Broadband: Wireless broadband internet service, which is high speed internet access without cables or wires, can be mobile or in a fixed location. Wireless internet connections rely heavily on being able to consume the necessary radio waves, so when those radio waves are not readily available (due to tree cover, topography, or distance) the wireless signal diminishes.

Does the County have an exclusive contract with Comcast?

No. The county had a franchise agreement with Comcast governing only the provision of cable TV services. This franchise agreement does not address internet service. The franchise agreement with Comcast is non-exclusive; all cable providers are welcome to and encouraged to expand their service into Hanover County on the same terms.

While access to cable television does increase the probability of Internet access, because both can be provided through the same cable, the franchise agreement does not govern internet services.

Does the County discourage any high speed internet provider from offering these services in Hanover County?

No. The County wants as many residents and businesses to have high quality internet service as possible.

It has been shared with the County that a perception exists that “the County” is in some way prohibiting Verizon from expanding FIOS in the county. This information is inaccurate. The County encourages and fully supports FIOS or any other internet service expansion.

The County does not have the authority to approve or deny high-speed internet services offered by any company; companies offer a service, or choose not to, based on their own business plans.

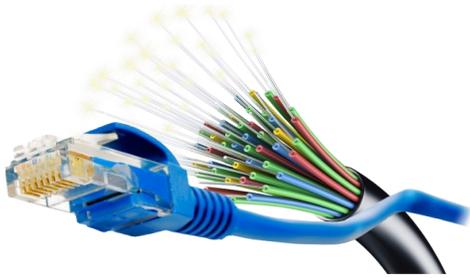
Why can't the County force Comcast to serve all residents?

Under the terms of the franchise agreement for cable TV, Comcast is required to extend cable service when the extension will provide cable service to 25 potential subscriber units per mile, provided the potential subscribers are within 150 feet of the proposed line extension. Comcast is not obligated to provide cable TV or other service in areas where it would not be financially feasible or otherwise meet Comcast's business objectives. Aside from the franchise agreement, Hanover County has no authority to require Comcast or any other private sector company to expand service. Such decisions by the private sector are market based.

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High Speed Internet in Hanover County



Does Hanover County Provide Internet Service to Residential Homes or Businesses?

No. Hanover County does not have an established utility to deliver internet services to county residents and has not committed any tax revenue for the delivery of internet services. The County believes private free-market businesses are best equipped to provide this service.

County staff had evaluated the potential cost of developing a Public Utility for Internet service provision in the less populated areas of the county and projected a minimum five-cent tax increase from all county residents would be needed to establish a utility. In addition, changing technology would require substantial reinvestment approximately every five years. While operational costs would be underwritten by user fees, there is not a certain predictable model to project the number of users that would be needed to fully subsidize the actual costs of the utility. At this time, the Board of Supervisors has determined not to proceed with this option.

HANOVER COUNTY'S SUPPORT OF HIGH SPEED INTERNET

Hanover County recognizes the importance of high speed internet access to all residents and businesses. Internet service provision is critical to the county's growth in economic development, quality of life, and educational program offerings. The County encourages all providers of high-speed internet services to provide services to all residents in Hanover county regardless of their proximity to current service areas. The County has taken the following steps to support internet service provision throughout the county:

- All known Internet Service providers have been contacted by the County to encourage expansion within Hanover County.
- The County makes available existing facilities and communication tower infrastructure to internet service providers. In fact the county currently has 20 agreements in place with providers on our existing infrastructure. The Board of Supervisors has removed barriers from the permitting process for tower expansion within the county to promote additional tower capacity.
- The County is currently evaluating potential contractors to more actively promote tower available sites and infrastructure to private internet service providers.
- The County makes high-speed internet service available in its branches of the Pamunkey Regional Library to the greatest extent possible and will continue to seek opportunities to expand public access to internet at public facilities.
- Rappahannock Electric was contacted and asked to consider to provide internet service to our residents and they declined to enter the internet service provision market in Hanover County.
- Hanover County has and will continue to evaluate grant and other funding opportunities available to public organizations. Historically, due to a variety of factors including income demographics, Hanover County has not qualified for any federal or state grants.
- The County will support applications, by providers, for grants and other incentives provided by the State and Federal government and private foundations to expand internet service to underserved areas of our community.
- The County is open to exploring opportunities to support resident groups who would be willing to make the financial commitments necessary to potentially create a special tax district within specific neighborhoods or geographical regions that have inadequate access to internet services. Services would be provided through private providers.
- The County has met with service providers and discussed needed expansion within the County. Most providers have expressed concern over their lack of opportunity to see a ROI (Return on Investment) for the needed capital to provide service within less densely populated areas of the county.
- County staff members are currently meeting with emerging providers of wireless technology to provide expanded service to residents.

