

February 7, 2020

DEVELOP NOVA SCOTIA--First Round of Internet for Nova Scotia Initiative Projects Announced

Nova Scotians deserve access to reliable, high-speed internet service, so they can live where they choose while staying connected and helping to grow our economy.

That is why government is making sure more Nova Scotians will have access to high-speed internet connections, with the announcement today, Feb. 7, of the first round of Internet for Nova Scotia Initiative projects.

Currently, about 70 per cent of homes and businesses have access to high speed internet. Today's announcement means 86 per cent of homes and businesses will have access to the service, close to the goal of achieving more than 95 per cent.

"This is great progress. A better-connected Nova Scotia is critical to our expanding economy and our quality of life. Today's Internet for Nova Scotia Initiative investments, and those to come, will ensure high-speed internet is available to as many homes and businesses as possible," said Premier Stephen McNeil.

Contracts with five internet service providers including Cross Country, in Canning, Kings Co., Mainland Telecom, in Middleton, Seaside Communications in Sydney, Bell Canada, and Xplornet, based in Woodstock, New Brunswick, have been signed with Develop Nova Scotia. Multiple communities are captured under independent projects by Cross Country, Mainland, Seaside, and Bell Canada using wired technology while Xplornet will cover about 16,000 unserved homes and businesses in Cumberland and Colchester counties through a mix of wired and fixed wireless services. Overall, the projects provide access to connections for more than 42,000 homes and businesses.

Through the Nova Scotia Internet Trust Fund -- a \$193 million fund established in 2018 by the government -- an investment of almost \$45 million is committed to these projects. The investment leverages funds of about \$56 million in private and other public sector funding.

Work has already begun in a few areas and will start in most communities early this year. It is anticipated to be substantially complete over the next year. Another call for projects will be issued by Develop Nova Scotia next week to seek projects for areas that remain underserved and unserved. Announcements for those projects are anticipated to be announced this summer.

Quotes:

“Great places are accessible and they’re connected. The Internet for Nova Scotia Initiative is a transformative project - in the way services can be delivered and accessed, to support business startup and growth, for tourism and for residents. Our job is to ensure the project is managed with integrity, significant public investment is managed prudently and value is maximized and the service that is ultimately delivered is reliable and high quality now and in the future. We are committed to delivering this for Nova Scotians.”

- Jennifer Angel, CEO, Develop Nova Scotia

“We are beyond excited for this announcement because it means not only Lockett Vineyards and the local wine industry, but all rural businesses in this part of the province, will have the opportunity to step into the 21st century. This empowers operators to modernize, increase efficiency, market our business and tell our stories on a broad scale. More comprehensive and faster operating systems will allow us to offer value-added services to our customers and continue to market our business in a modern and consistent manner.”

- Geena Lockett, owner/general manager, Lockett Vineyards

Quick Facts:

- wired technology projects will provide minimum speeds of 50 Mbps to download, and 10 Mbps to upload, while wireless technologies will provide minimum speeds of 25 Mbps to download, and 5 Mbps to upload, allowing users to browse email, download music and large files, play online games, and stream high definition video
- 10 pre-qualified internet service providers were invited to submit proposals for this request for proposals- a second round of five pre-qualified providers is approved and all 15 are eligible to respond to all future request for proposals
- Develop Nova Scotia is the Crown corporation responsible for the strategy to help connect more communities across the province
- connecting more than 95 per cent of Nova Scotians is a big project and these projects can typically take two to five years

Additional Resources:

A breakdown list of communities by provider, access to potential number of connections, as well as Internet Trust funding, by zone, is available at <https://developns.ca/projects/high-speed-internet/>

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Internet for Nova Scotia Initiative Backgrounder: Round #1 RFP Results by Zone

ZONE NAME* **	COMMUNITIES (parts of communities)	ACCESS TO CONNECTIONS (approx. #)	TECHNOLOGY	NSIFT \$
#1 Western	Bear River Pinkeys Point Sandy Cove (Bell) Clare (Mainland) **	2,500	Wired to home/business (fibre or coax)	\$5.5M
#2 Shelburne	Lockport Sable River Shelburne Clyde River Woods Harbour (Bell)	4,100	Wired to home/business (fibre or coax)	\$1.9M
#3 Annapolis Valley	Bear River Brooklyn East Dalhousie Port Lorne Scots Bay (Bell) Belcher Cambridge Canning Glenmont Grand Pre Woodville (Cross Country)	4,800	Wired to home/business (fibre or coax)	\$3.3M
#4 South Shore	Caledonia Chelsea New Germany New Ross (Bell)	3,300	Wired to home/business (fibre or coax)	\$2.1M
#5 / #6 Cumberland & Truro-Colchester	Unserved or underserved homes & businesses in Cumberland & Truro-Colchester Counties (Xplornet) ***	16,000	Wired to home/business / Wireless	\$19.9M
# 7 HRM	Elmsdale Kennetcook Noel Prospect Road Walton (Bell)	2,100	Wired to home/business (fibre or coax)	\$2.4M
#9 Eastern Strait	Goshen Malignant Cove (Bell)	1,500	Wired to home/business (fibre or coax)	\$2.6M
#10 Rural Cape Breton	Boularderie Cheticamp Dingwall Inverness (Bell)	3,900	Wired to home/business (fibre or coax)	\$3.0M
#11 CBRM	Boisdale (Bell) Grand Mira South Marion Bridge Louisbourg Main-a-Dieu and surrounding areas Eskasoni (Seaside)	4,700	Wired to home/business (fibre or coax)	\$3.9M
		42,900		\$44.6M

* May not include all Zones due to in-progress negotiations

**These are the names of our Internet zones and not meant to represent the counties they fall within. Our zone map can be viewed at

<https://developns.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Internet-for-Nova-Scotia-683x1024.jpeg>

LEVERAGED \$

Funding Source	Total \$ Provided (approx.)
Bell Canada	\$15,800,000
Xplornet	\$22,600,000
Mainland Telecom	\$ 927,000 + \$2.2M****
Cross Country	\$ 817,000
Seaside	\$ 1,200,000
Eskasoni – Infrastructure Canada funding	\$ 2,500,000
Counties of Cumberland & Truro-Colchester	\$ 6,000,000
Municipality of District of Yarmouth	\$ 75,000
Municipality of District of Digby	\$ 100,000
Municipality of District of Shelburne	\$ 1,100,000
Municipality of District of Queens	\$ 435,000
Municipality of District of Clare	\$ 927,000 + \$1.5M***
Municipality of District of Barrington	\$ 200,000
Total Leveraged \$	\$56,381,000

Internet for Nova Scotia Initiative – Round #1 RFP Results

(* Goal = +95% coverage of NS homes & businesses)

# unserved or underserved NS homes & businesses (approx.)	88,000	70% served (as @ Spring 2018)
# connections made possible through Round #1		<u>- 42,900</u>
# remaining unserved/ underserved NS homes & businesses	45,100	86% served (as @ Feb 7, 2020)
Investment from Nova Scotia Internet Funding Trust	\$45M	
Total funding leveraged from private & other public sector	\$56M	

Facilitating Further Internet Enhancements...

*****Municipality of District of Clare:** The municipality has committed \$1.5M more funding and Mainland Telecom will invest an additional \$2.2M to improve high-speed Internet service in their municipality for an **additional 3,500 homes and businesses** not eligible under the Internet for Nova Scotia Initiative.

******Counties of Cumberland & Truro-Colchester:** The municipalities will soon formalize their commitment to contribute a combined \$6 million dollars to their project with Xplornet, which has identified an **additional 8,000 homes and businesses** not eligible under the Internet for Nova Scotia Initiative that will have access to improved high-speed Internet service. New service will primarily be delivered by fixed-wireless and wired technologies, with satellite for remaining addresses.

Common Questions Related to the Internet for Nova Scotia Initiative

Q. When will I get high-speed service?

If your home/business is included in this round of projects, work should be substantially complete within 12 months. For the remaining areas, the next RFP goes out within the next week and we're aiming for announcements later this summer. Connecting 95% of Nova Scotians is a big undertaking and these projects can typically take between 2–5 years. With today's announcement, we've cut by half the number of unserved and underserved homes and businesses to be covered, and they remain our priority.

Q. My community is mentioned in today's announcement? What's next?

Now that contracts are signed, service providers will work on additional engineering required to refine their plans down to specific street- and address-level detail. Information on those details will be provided by the service providers, when available. As work proceeds, impacted Nova Scotians will be notified by service providers as to when and how to have their homes and businesses connected. Develop Nova Scotia will also be hosting community drop-in events over the coming weeks and months and will welcome members of the general public.

Q. What's the overall timeline for Nova Scotia?

Connecting 95% of Nova Scotians is a big undertaking and these projects can typically take between 2–5 years. The timing of your access depends on when we receive a proposed project for your area, what already exists in your community, and how quickly providers can upgrade existing technology or install new technology. With today's announcement, we've cut by half the number of unserved and underserved homes and businesses to be covered, and they remain our priority.

Q. How will the providers be held accountable?

In addition to contribution agreements, contracts with providers also include multi-year service delivery agreements. These ensure accountability for service and quality standards, a competitive pricing structure, and ongoing maintenance and investment in the network. Service level agreements will be managed by Develop Nova Scotia.