Clearwater County residents have asked for more detailed information about the County's broadband project. This dedicated newsletter is part of our commitment to provide transparent, factual updates about the work underway. These e-newsletter updates will continue on a regular basis as the project moves forward. Below you will find background on how this project developed, what is being built, who is involved, and what choices residents and businesses have.

A project more than 20 years in the making

Improving internet access in Clearwater County is not a new idea. The County has been studying, planning, and advocating for better broadband for more than two decades.

Over that time:
- Residents and businesses consistently identified reliable internet as a major challenge
- Technology options evolved from wireless and satellite to fibre-based solutions
- Provincial and federal governments introduced funding programs focused on rural broadband
- Clearwater County evaluated multiple delivery models and funding opportunities before moving forward

The current broadband project is the result of long-term planning, feasibility studies, and approved funding applications. It is not a sudden or externally driven initiative.

Residents can view a timeline of the project's development on the next page.

What the County is building

Clearwater County is constructing a County-owned fibre network. This network is infrastructure, like roads or utilities, designed to improve long-term connectivity across the County for its residents and businesses.
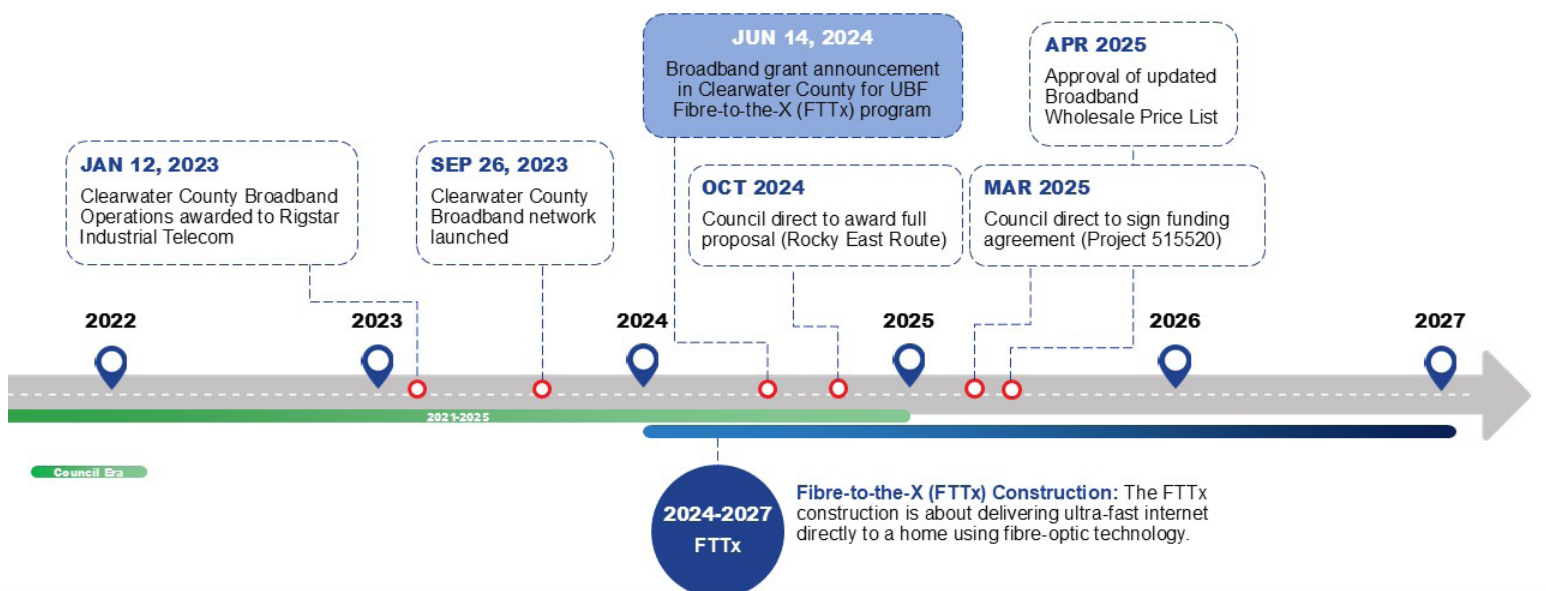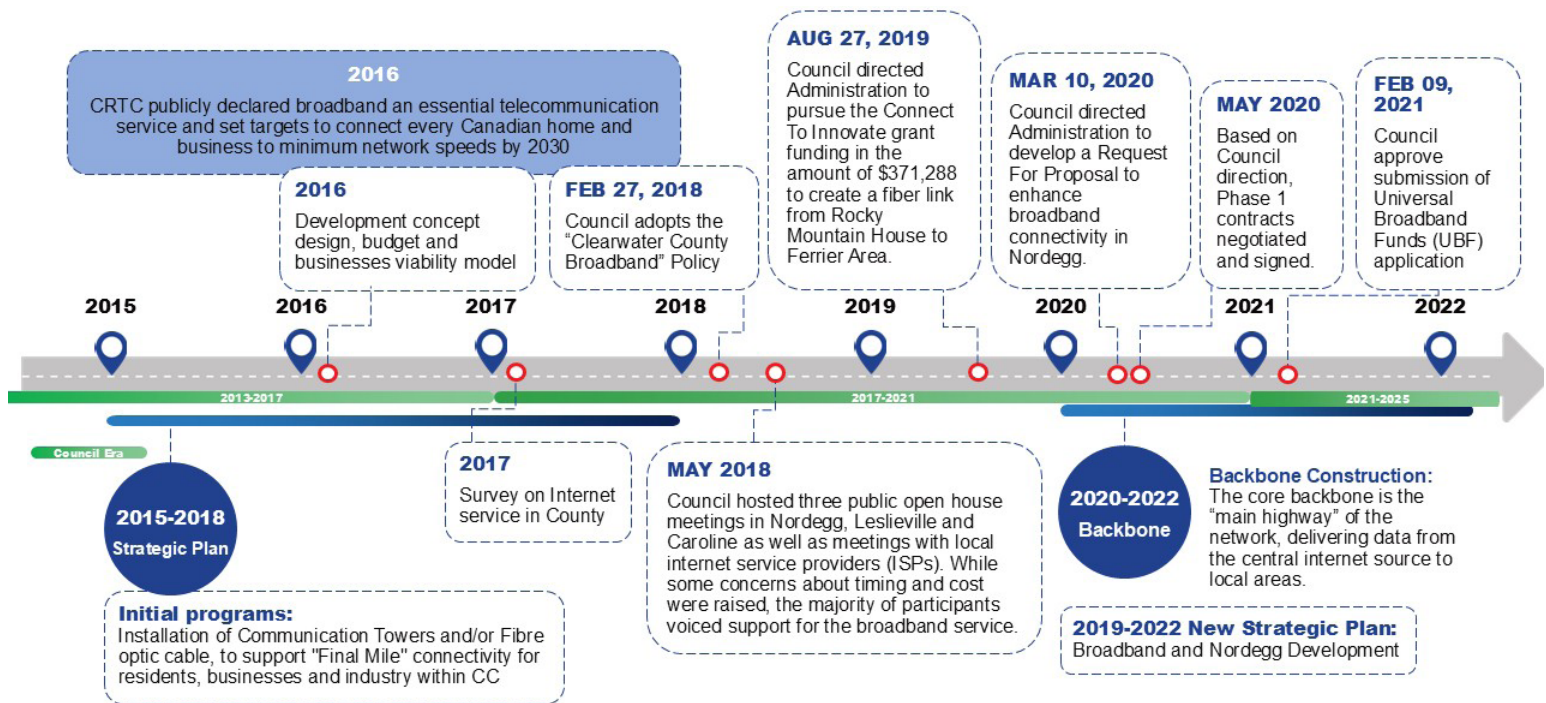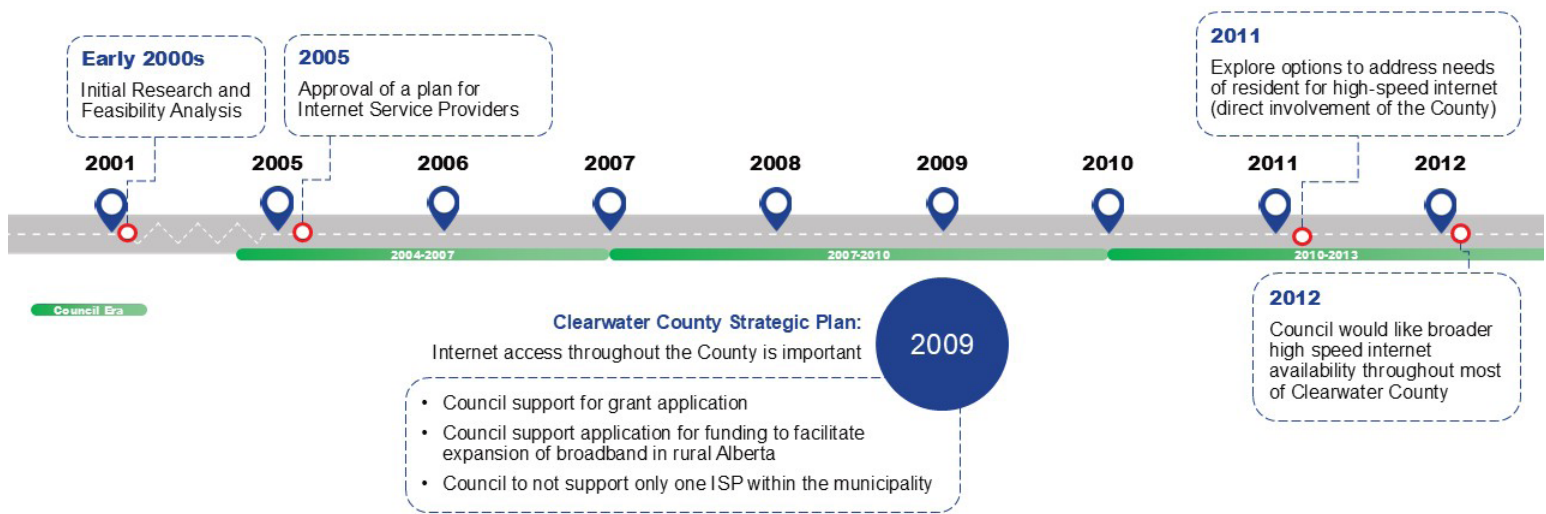
Key points:
- The fibre network is owned 100% by Clearwater County
- It is open-access, meaning no single internet provider controls it - more choice and no monopoly
- It creates the foundation for improved internet services now and in the future
- Residents are not required to connect or subscribe and may continue using existing services

Internet service providers

Internet service providers (ISPs) lease the County-owned fibre network to offer their own internet services to residents and businesses at the rates and packages they determine.
- Clearwater County does not sell internet services directly to residents
- Residents and businesses choose if and when they want to sign up, and which providers best meet their needs
- The County has received interest from at least 5 internet service providers and is currently in the process of signing service level agreements with each.
- Additional providers may join over time, including those offering services beyond internet

When available, residents and businesses will be able to compare providers, packages, and pricing all in one spot on: **market.cwcbb.ca**

Timeline Section 1 (2001–2012)

Early 2000s
Initial Research and Feasibility Analysis

2005
Approval of a plan for Internet Service Providers

2011
Explore options to address needs of resident for high-speed internet (direct involvement of the County)

Timeline years: 2001 — 2005 — 2006 — 2007 — 2008 — 2009 — 2010 — 2011 — 2012

Era bands: 2004-2007 | 2007-2010 | 2010-2013

Council Era

Clearwater County Strategic Plan:
Internet access throughout the County is important

2009

- Council support for grant application
- Council support application for funding to facilitate expansion of broadband in rural Alberta
- Council to not support only one ISP within the municipality

2012
Council would like broader high speed internet availability throughout most of Clearwater County

Timeline Section 2 (2015–2022)

2016
CRTC publicly declared broadband an essential telecommunication service and set targets to connect every Canadian home and business to minimum network speeds by 2030

2016
Development concept design, budget and businesses viability model

FEB 27, 2018
Council adopts the "Clearwater County Broadband" Policy

AUG 27, 2019
Council directed Administration to pursue the Connect To Innovate grant funding in the amount of $371,288 to create a fiber link from Rocky Mountain House to Ferrier Area.

MAR 10, 2020
Council directed Administration to develop a Request For Proposal to enhance broadband connectivity in Nordegg.

MAY 2020
Based on Council direction, Phase 1 contracts negotiated and signed.

FEB 09, 2021
Council approve submission of Universal Broadband Funds (UBF) application

Timeline years: 2015 — 2016 — 2017 — 2018 — 2019 — 2020 — 2021 — 2022

Era bands: 2013-2017 | 2017-2021 | 2021-2025

Council Era

2015-2018
Strategic Plan

2017
Survey on Internet service in County

MAY 2018
Council hosted three public open house meetings in Nordegg, Leslieville and Caroline as well as meetings with local internet service providers (ISPs). While some concerns about timing and cost were raised, the majority of participants voiced support for the broadband service.

Initial programs:
Installation of Communication Towers and/or Fibre optic cable, to support "Final Mile" connectivity for residents, businesses and industry within CC

2020-2022
Backbone

Backbone Construction:
The core backbone is the "main highway" of the network, delivering data from the central internet source to local areas.

2019-2022 New Strategic Plan:
Broadband and Nordegg Development

Timeline Section 3 (2022–2027)

JUN 14, 2024
Broadband grant announcement in Clearwater County for UBF Fibre-to-the-X (FTTx) program

APR 2025
Approval of updated Broadband Wholesale Price List

JAN 12, 2023
Clearwater County Broadband Operations awarded to Rigstar Industrial Telecom

SEP 26, 2023
Clearwater County Broadband network launched

OCT 2024
Council direct to award full proposal (Rocky East Route)

MAR 2025
Council direct to sign funding agreement (Project 515520)

Timeline years: 2022 — 2023 — 2024 — 2025 — 2026 — 2027

Era band: 2021-2025

Council Era

2024-2027
FTTx

Fibre-to-the-X (FTTx) Construction: The FTTx construction is about delivering ultra-fast internet directly to a home using fibre-optic technology.

What is Fibre Connect?

Fibre Connect is an optional program that allows a property to be connected from the fibre line at the municipal access point on the road to their home or business.

Important details:
- Fibre Connect prepares a property for future internet service
- Signing up does not require purchasing internet service
- There is no obligation to choose a provider immediately
- It is a one-time infrastructure connection, not a subscription
- Over 400 residents have already signed up for Fibre Connect since the end of November

An early bird rate of $399 for the first 100m, plus $14/m beyond that, is currently available. Once the overall network construction is completed, the standard rate of $1500 for the first 100m will apply. The County's contractor AFL, is currently working in communities across the County, assisting with Fibre Connect signups.

Residents can check availability, review details, and sign up at: **market.cwcbb.ca**

Why some areas are being built first

Construction is happening in phases across Clearwater County. Areas were selected based on:
- Eligibility requirements tied to provincial and federal funding programs.
- Areas with internet service below the minimum standard of 50 Mbps/10 Mbps were prioritized
- Engineering feasibility, existing infrastructure and construction logistics
- Population density and potential impact
- Cost considerations and overall project impact

Approximately 75% of construction costs in the initial build areas are funded through provincial and federal government grant programs. Clearwater County is currently reviewing options to extend the network to additional areas that were not eligible under those programs.

A map showing current and planned construction areas is available online and is updating continually as work progresses. Visit: market.cwcbb.ca , to check the status of your property.

Common questions we are hearing

Is participation mandatory?
No. Participation is optional. Some residents may not require the reliability or speeds offered by high-speed fibre internet.

Who controls the network?
The network is owned by Clearwater County and operated under approved agreements. There is no foreign ownership, no third-party control, and no major telecommunications company is involved.

Do I need to decide now?
No. Residents can choose to wait and decide later. The only time-limited offer at this time, is the Fibre Connect early bird pricing.

When will the network be ready to deliver internet services?
The network will be ready in Spring 2026 and dependent on the construction status in each neighbourhood. To check the construction status for your property, please visit: **market.cwcbb.ca**

When will the construction be completed?
Grant funding requires that all construction must be completed by March 31, 2027.

How Clearwater County will share updates

To ensure residents have access to accurate information, updates will be shared through:

- Clearwater County monthly e-newsletters and mailed quarterly updates
- The Clearwater County broadband Page found at: **www.clearwatercounty.ca/broadband**
- The Clearwater County Broadband project website at: **market.cwcbb.ca**
- Printed materials in community, recreation facilities, and newspapers

For verified information and updates, visit: **market.cwcbb.ca**

Thank you for taking the time to stay informed.

Clearwater County Broadband Team