

Representative Comments from 2013-2014 Western Washtenaw Residential Broadband Survey

"Economically speaking, by virtue of not having internet access, this area has become a "3rd-world" environment. This has been disastrous for our kids and dramatically decreases the appeal of living here, developing a business here, maintaining community communications, etc. I have talked with the Township on several occasions about the resources that exist (the existing fiber-optic cable) and ways to take public ownership of this resource which was paid for with provide funds/assessments."

"Broadband is a necessity for anyone these days, services ranging from banking to car registration, healthcare registration and connections to places of employment are all online. Areas without adequate broadband options become very undesirable for anyone working in a professional capacity."

"High speed/unlimited broadband internet access is expected today and hurts property values if it is not available. Think of it as trying to sell a house that doesn't have electrical service available. Who's going to buy it? At some point, those who do not have unlimited broadband access available to them will demand this shortcoming be reflected in their property assessments."

"Both my husband and I routinely work at home and require high speed internet access to do out work. We also have a high schooler who needs to access the internet for schoolwork. If we want our community to grow, then broadband access is absolutely critical. Businesses will not move into our area without this access nor will people will buy homes here unless they can work remotely/easily access the internet."

"I have a part time job at Measurement Incorporated that is ending due to their switching over to in home work where high speed broadband is required. I also had an opportunity for a part time job at Enterprise Car Rental doing in home customer service, but again I am required to have broadband service. We have talking about moving so that we might be able to have broadband service. Increasingly, I believe our property values will be affected because of non-service. Being two miles away from Ann Arbor, it is a joke that I cannot get service in one of the most tech savvy places in USA."

"Our children are at a disadvantage in school because of inadequate internet availability. We have considered moving out of the area due to this problem. It has gotten worse as websites have added so much video content, yet our capped bandwidth has not increased."

"Had I known how bad internet was here--I may not have purchased this home. The cell phone based internet service is very expensive and slow--I've tried Hughes.net--same with that carrier--It's very frustrating! I need internet for work and have to go to the Library."

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“Cell phone reception is non-existent; internet so limited it is painful; sporadic, poor signal, SLOW. Lack of services is reason I will move as soon as possible from this area. I'm tired of the hassle with providers this area creates and fighting a losing battle with them. I would not have moved to this area had I known services were this troublesome and EXPENSIVE!”

“We have given up on internet at our house; we did have dial-up and then satellite-based. The dial-up of course, was too slow and frustrating and required an additional phone line to the house. The satellite was very expensive (about \$150/mo.) and was still limited; if you downloaded too much today, you could get nothing tomorrow, etc... Perhaps everything is better now but hard to pay the money to find out it is just more frustrating, so we have given up... we just have internet access at our offices and rely on our smart phones to get a bit of data while we are home. We feel terribly isolated and feel as if we are losing ground every day.”

“I started out with DSL - it was terrible. Service kept going out, and AT&T is so bad, I will never go back. Ever. We switched to Verizon for our internet. Problem is they are data limited and charge \$15/gigabyte of overages. I spent so much time on the phone trying to figure out how to reduce data usage it became a job. I dropped them for Hughes net. I don't like it, but at least they don't charge overages when you reach the limits. Latency is a huge issue and I (as well as the rest of my family) cannot do any online gaming. I understand the limitations and restrictions for getting better internet, but something must be a possibility. I would prefer as standard 15 megabit per second cable line, or anything with unlimited data and decent speeds and I'm not paying \$100 a month for it. This is actually one of the severe drawbacks to living where we do.”

“I am incredibly disappointed with the lack of choice for internet providers that service my address. I have searched for the past four years to find out internet solution. Unfortunately, the only internet technologies that service my house use mobile 3G/4G and satellite--both of which are hindered by pathetically slow download and are outrageously expensive. Needless to say, these solutions do not work for me.”

“My community does not have cable or DSL available. The only options are 3G/4G and satellite. I moved here when Wireless Washtenaw was promised. We desperately need REAL internet service in our community. I am willing to pay whatever it takes - I simply want the option to get there. I am currently using 4G which is barely acceptable.”

“I am so happy to see there is at least some interest from our township to find reasonable broadband service in our area. We moved to Lyndon from the Detroit metro area where we had cable internet. I was very disappointed to find that the only internet available was satellite or Cellular. Both being slow, expensive and having unreasonable data caps. I use the internet daily for work and for our small business. I need something that is reliable, fast and isn't outrageously priced. I am currently stuck paying \$150 a month for mediocre internet. In town, I paid \$60 for no cap and very fast speed. HELP US OUT HERE!!”

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The following additional comments are a small subset of the hundreds of comments received in response to our broadband survey, but they serve as good examples of the key issues expressed. Many other comments in the survey (not included here) centered on the relative cost of broadband and issues with specific broadband providers. Comments below have been grouped into other common themes as indicated.

Frustration with Lack of Broadband Access

Please bring us into the 21st century. We would be willing to join a class action to obtain redress for overbilling for the past 8 years we have had this service.

Way too expensive and SLOW I would be willing to pay what cable subscribers pay. We are located only 1 mile from Chelsea city limit but have no cable service.

Service must be unlimited. I would hope for minimum 1Mb/second download speed. With both of those, I'd happily pay \$100. (We pay more than that for woefully inadequate service.)

I have Frontier fiber optic cable running through my yard and yet I cannot connect to it because another company has the rights for my area. We should not be limited with our choices of internet access.

The only option I have in my neighborhood is EZWisp which is managed by a neighbor. I feel like I live in a "black hole". You can walk across the street to another neighborhood and get AT&T. This is 2014-that is ridiculous!!!!

*I'm *very* unhappy that while on the one hand we pay a tax on our phones to go to communications infrastructure development, the county seems to ignore the rural areas and instead works to provide enhanced services for the cities (e.g., fiber optic in Ann Arbor, etc.) that already have good broadband service. It's not fair!!*

I need full business class internet of at least 50Mbps. The US is like a third world country when it comes to high speed internet. In the UK, I have friends that get 60/30 Mbps broadband for about \$50 per month! Similar prices in Germany. On my best service days I get 0.02/0.01 Mbps for \$70 per month. Makes me sick to my stomach.

The internet is required for countless day to day needs and info. The air waves should be free and accessible to all. We are being ripped off and held hostage to 2 year contract coupled with lousy service by providers.

We have begged Comcast to bring service to our house - they service the property adjacent to us, but they say they can't. We even offer to pay for the connections.

Both Cable + del are 1000' away from our house. Come on this is 2013!

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Risk of Falling Behind

It is sad and unacceptable to live in this township and have no good net access in 2014.

Please bring faster internet to Washtenaw. We need more choices as well! The US is falling very far behind and innovation will suffer without widespread, fast, and affordable internet. We need FIBER! The only way to make the incumbents AT&T and Charter increase speeds is to introduce a competitor to the system. This has been proven in places like Austin and Kansas City, where Google Fiber has forced Time Warner and other competitors to offer increased speeds at low prices. I think that it is pathetic that we live in 2013 and cannot get cable or DSL.

Modern society = internet. Access to high speed broadband is necessary & good place to start is township level. Fact is some citizens have better access than others & that is unacceptable.

Time to get out of the "stone age" and make available functional high speed internet at competitive prices

In this day and age, it is almost unbelievable that high speed internet is not available.

Our children are missing out on the potential of the internet since we have to limit bandwidth or pay penalties.

Cable not available; DSL not available; Satellite unreliable/expensive. In 2014, connection=life. No connection=dead person.

Need for Provider Competition

Charter is currently the only cable Provider available - no competition - Higher rates.

Provider choice would be helpful in being able to negotiate reasonable fees for this service.

Decisions that improve or enhance service, perhaps through increased competition, would be welcome.

Competition needed to keep prices down.

Why is the township only limited to Charter?

Creating cable internet competition is long overdue!

Government Should Help

Living in a rural area there is no real high speed internet connection available. This is one area government should help with policies to change that fact.

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I cannot believe that the leadership in xxxxxxxx Township has not pushed the suppliers in this area to offer some sort of DSL more broadly. I have about 20 households within less than 1/2 of a mile who would sign up today. Revoke their franchise. Bring them in for a meeting. Do something.

All of society benefits when government supports expanding infrastructure.

Limitations on Broadband Service

Have to use cell phone as hotspot for wifi. Expensive for limited no other broadband available

Satellite is only option. I used HughesNet in past-also unsatisfactory. Want unlimited, fast cheaper. Willing to pay \$20-\$40, as low as possible, of course with unlimited access. Students are required to use the internet daily for assignments. It is impossible to complete work for my business from home due to the cost of internet and limitations. I often must participate in webcasts and video-conferencing, which deplete my allowance quickly. Further, our kids need internet for school. There are things we could do with DSL that we do not do now: watching movies, videos, streaming music, etc. It feels like we are in the internet dark ages out here in Manchester when a few miles away, colleagues have so many more options and abilities.

There is no cable access, no DSL service. The access available includes satellite or cellphone based. Both are compromised by either cost of equipment (initial investment) or limited quality.

We just switched to satellite internet in the past week and although it functions the data limitations make it very difficult and speeds are slow

My neighbors and I pay a king's ransom for crummy cell-phone-based internet access because no cable solution is available. We would generally pay over \$100 per home for a true high-speed solution.

Internet access is only available thru satellite in this area. Hi speed is not available thru AT&T dialup. Cell and wireless is weak and spotty. DSL is not available nor any cable access.

We were forced to install an expensive antenna on our barn with a repeater to get the signal to our house.

Currently we only have satellite internet available. It is too expensive to change our satellite over and upgrade our service. It occurs to me that Comcast should be made to run their cable throughout Sylvan Township and make it available to every household or home! We live in a dip in the road with hills on both sides and do not receive cell phone service.

Currently we are using Verizon 4G, but it's expensive and disconnects at times. We would like to see cable internet available.

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Have tried dial up, satellite and now cell phone at this location. all too slow

I live in the woods, cannot use satellite. Public road 1/2 mile from my home, therefore do not have cable. Dialup only option. TV antenna only option.

I appreciate that local officials are looking into this matter. Washtenaw county is one of the most populated in the state, yet the internet access is lacking. I am hopeful that this will change in the near future. There must not be caps imposed on data usage either! Our satellite usage is capped @ 10 G / month and our cell phone internet was too slow - mostly at 3G signal with Verizon.

Comcast is willing to offer High speed internet, but the build out cost is about \$65,000 to bring to the home. Satellite is slow and expensive, while also being metered

Even though I have service, I still go to the library, my daughter's house, coffee shops, and other local businesses when I need to download large files.

The internet that we have available to us here is very expensive and very limited. Many of our children's homework assignments require online access to video, which eat up the GB that we are allowed per month (max 10). Bridgewater Township needs unlimited internet access available to us!

Please help us get broadband in Sharon Township. Our options are limited and the services available have issues. We need the government to come to the rescue like they did when copper phones lines were first installed in rural areas. Comcast will never come out to this area and ATT isn't interested either.

Our satellite service is slow, limited, and EXPENSIVE!! Please help us to have access to better and less expensive service!

General Need for Broadband

I can't explain how thrilled I would be to have high speed internet!

Please bring high speed internet to our community. Please!

High speed internet is absolutely vital to an area, and it is a necessary addition to any community. The wireless providers (such as rural reach) are excellent, but we MUST have ground lines eventually.

Wish fiber optic internet was offered at a lower price and offered as an option for everyone, not just businesses.

Like it or not! it is becoming essential infrastructure

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In this day and age when everything is done on computers we need to have reliable access.

Why did you not do this 10 years ago?

If county wide high speed internet access is made available, the minimal costs should be levied on all taxpayers.

Internet service allows gaining information outside. It is important for all ages of life.

Starting to think that maybe internet access should be like a public utility.

I would love to have cable or reliable, cost-effective broadband internet access, it facilitates functioning for school for my children, work, business opportunity.

I would be willing to pay for unlimited, fast, and reliable broadband internet service with a property tax assessment much like we presently pay for the Library in Chelsea.

This is very important as everything is becoming internet based. we live in an area not served by cable and satellite is too expensive and slow. Something needs to be done!

Property Value Concerns

We would certainly appreciate having high speed internet. Life is quite difficult without and I feel it lowers property value as a result!

I considered not purchasing my home due to the lack of sufficient internet service. I can't stress enough how much improved internet is desired in this area.

This is a major problem! Have considered leaving the township because of it.

Was disappointed and frustrated that we had to switch internet providers when we moved here 5 years ago, because Comcast was not available, yet it was available less than 1 mile down the street!

Bought my house on assumption that Comcast was available because their website said it was. Comcast says we're a mere mile out of reach.

Probably will move.

It has been very frustrating living in a small pocket on Joy Road that does not have cable or broadband. Houses to our left and right have this service. We are considering moving because of the inconvenience. It would be wonderful to be able to access the internet without worrying about data usage.

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I may be able to get by with my slower speed, but if I ever want to sell my property, a fast internet would be a good selling point

Broadband access was critical to purchasing this property. If ATT & Charter had not both lied about access I'd live elsewhere.

Having broadband internet service in this area is critical. It influences property values as many people would not consider living here if they couldn't have easy broadband access. This will be an even greater issue in the coming years.

Education Needs

It is extremely stressful to not have high speed internet at your house. Trying to do homework for school or downloading something and your internet not working is stressful. It has been incredibly hard to do anything internet related for the past 11 years. Please help us!

College students at home.

I need it for tutoring.

Kids moved to college for faster speeds because they could not do homework. Sad! Please help us move into 2014 with internet service.

Chelsea library- when my child has a project due and we can't connect to our satellite we have to go to the library.

Children are disadvantaged because many school assignments are now internet based

Kids need it for school!!!!!!

Please, please do something about internet. I have 2 college students and a high schooler who need to submit online assignments.

I go to school online and the Satellite service I have sometimes makes it VERY difficult to complete assignments on time. I do not feel that the cost I am paying is worth the service that I get, but upgrading to a "faster" speed through this provider is outrageous and I do not want to commit to another 2 year contract.

Our high school-aged daughter cannot connect to the internet that we have to use her Ipad from school. We drop her off early every morning at the High School so she can do her homework.

I am a commuting student attending Ilisagvik College, Alaska's first and only tribal college on the North Slope in Barrow, Alaska. I am studying health care and more. I have been waiting

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over ten years for high speed internet at my home in Sharon Township, Michigan. Comcast offers broadband service less than two miles away but doesn't want to service our community in Sharon Township. I can get better internet service in rural Barrow, Alaska or while in-flight at 32,000 feet above the planet than I can get at home in Sharon Township, Michigan. I use internet extensively for my college studies.

Love rural Washtenaw, internet problem is the only thing I do not like about where we live. Increasingly difficult as computer age advances and so do requirements for kids' schooling.

Both kids have Ipads for school and I work from home 2-3 days a week. I would love to have a broadband service.

Telecommuting and Business

I need it for my job and for my online classes.

Important because I need to access my work emails when I am home.

I would love to be able to work from home, but am unable.

Require high speed access to telecommute.

I work from home so Internet is very important.

I was so excited to get this survey! I am begging and pleading for a hard-line internet option in my home. Working from home would be so much more efficient and cost effective. I really hope you consider doing this.

Even to work at home on the corporate VPN requires a high speed connection

I work from home 3 days per week. Reliable, fast internet is a must have for my job.

We work from our home, so having reliable service is IMPERATIVE!!

Our jobs require internet access. We could be more productive with higher speeds and no data limits.

I am an IT professional, so high speed Internet is essential for my job. Washtenaw county needs high speed internet that provides: 1. Reliable service. 2. No unreasonable data usage caps/charges (like the limits and charges from satellite and 4G providers).

I cannot effectively run a business from my house. Others in the area have internet service. We need central internet service for everyone.

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Need high speed for business software updates and email, both business and personal. I'm located in a dead zone cell coverage is minimal and there is no cable service at this address.