



Town of Stephentown
26 Grange Hall Rd., Stephentown, NY 12168

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June 20th, 2016

Hon. Kathleen H. Burgess
Secretary to the Commission
New York State Public Service Commission
Agency Building 3
Albany, NY 12223-1350

***Re: Joint Petition of Charter Communications and Time Warner Cable for Approval of a Transfer of Control of Subsidiaries and Franchises, Pro Forma Reorganization, and Certain Financing Arrangements.
Case 15-M-0388***

Dear Secretary Burgess,

Please consider this communication as a request for the Commission's support and approval for our request to Charter Communication's for inclusion of Stephentown pursuant to the Commission's order under case 15-M-0388 together with the standards and requirements satisfying public interests contained thereunder. The town of Stephentown suffers from outdated or non-existent cable and broadband services. Stephentown relies on some form of communication as part of our personal, professional or public lives. Whether communicating by voice, e-mail or text message, or receiving content over the Internet, access to terrestrial, wireless or satellite communications are, without question, an essential component of our town's growth and stability. The needs of Stephentown residents and institutions, such as our homes, businesses, and public service institutions, rely on robust and stable communication networks to remain in contact with family, friends and businesses. Additionally, numerous Stephentown commercial and home-based businesses in the areas of advertising, media and data production rely on an open communications network to reach consumers nationally and internationally. All of Stephentown's US census tracts meet the FCC definition of underserved with respect to broadband access to the internet and therefore are consistent in meeting the Commission's goal of expanding coverage to an additional 145,000 unserved/underserved residential housing units and/or businesses. While we are not currently in the Charter service footprint, we are nearby and in adjacent proximity to Charter's existing franchise areas and are willingly amenable to enter good faith negotiations for a certificate of franchise commitment with Charter Communications consistent with State and Federal regulations.

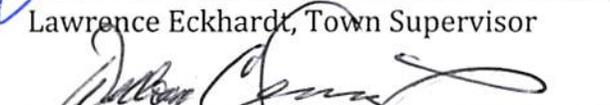
We are attaching responses from a survey conducted last year to further validate our need for enhanced broadband access for our residences and businesses. If you need further materials or information in order to consider our request please don't hesitate to contact me or Gerry Robinson, Chairperson of our IT Broadband Planning Committee.

Respectfully Submitted,

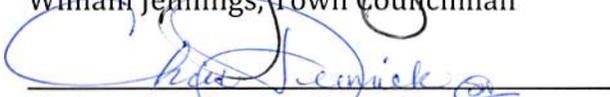
Stephentown Town Board



Lawrence Eckhardt, Town Supervisor



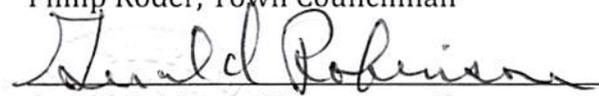
William Jennings, Town Councilman



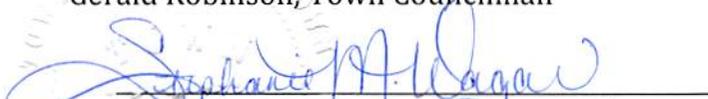
Christopher Demick, Town Councilman



Philip Roder, Town Councilman



Gerald Robinson, Town Councilman



Stephanie M. Wagar, Town Clerk (SEAL)

Contact Information:

Lawrence Eckhardt, Town Supervisor

Email: kcfcaac@fairpoint.net

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Gerald Robinson, Town Councilman

Email: robinsongw0@gmail.com

Broadband Survey - Stephentown Responses

172 responses received from those in Stephentown

- 135 "Residential" locations
- 28 "Residential with a home-based business" locations
- 5 "Commercial" locations
- 2 "Residential" & "Residential with a home-based business" locations
- 1 "Residential" & "Commercial" location
- 157 Have a personal computer or internet ready device
- 15 Do not have a personal computer or internet ready device
- 145 Currently have internet service available at the address
- 27 Do not currently have internet service available at the address
- 114 Use DSL as their internet connection
- 10 Use a cell hot-spot as their internet connection
- 8 Use dial-up as their internet connection
- 8 Use satellite as their internet connection
- 6 Use cable modem as their internet connection
- 28 have their needs met by their internet connection
- 51 find their internet connection too slow
- 25 find their internet connection unreliable
- 39 find their internet connection too slow and unreliable
- \$71.34 average monthly cost of internet connection (may include phone charges)
- \$65 median cost of internet connection (may include phone charges)
- 66 say their cell service is "fine"
- 6 say their cell service "doesn't work"
- 33 say their cell service "works sometimes"
- 51 say their cell service is degraded
- 13 don't have cell service
- \$41.37 average price for internet service considered affordable
- \$40 median price for internet service considered affordable
- 54 respondents have students in their household
- 118 respondents do not have students in their household
- 50 run a business or satellite office from the location
- 122 do not run a business or satellite office from the location
- 43 who run a business or satellite office from the location find the lack of internet or inadequate bandwidth hinders their business.

Comments

We have no internet access except by cell phone hot spot.

We are in a dead zone between 2 competing and unresponsibe cable companies.

Hi-speed access is a necessity for our household, community and commerce.

Had to purchase and install network extender to make cellular service work fine.

The only affordable internet service in our area is Fairpoint Communications. Service is poor.

Interested in working from home - access to office's electronic files remotely.

Kind of a funny commentary that you don't provide an option to complete this survey on line...

This property does not have an inhabitable structure. Prior to this the residence did not have any utilities.

Dropped internet service because it cost too much.

We need affordable everything in this area. Many of our families are low income.

Fairpoint has a monopoly out here and can charge whatever they want. If I had broadband, I could drop my landline which I seldom use. My monthly Fairpoint bill is \$85+/month - a lot for someone on Social Security! Thanks for doing this survey. Good luck with getting the grants!

Our family believes that access to broadband internet is essential to rural life so that we may better participate in our economy and democracy.

Affordable price depends on speed.

This survey should also have been available on your website as a quicker means to collect the required
Uses Cell phone tetner. \$20/month affordable price with unlimited data.

For my consulting work, I have occasion to need video rates or have to transfer large amounts of data reliably. To do this, I currently drive to Wynantskill, where I can plug into an Ethernet port on Time-Warner cable. If I'm just doing the research part of a project or purchasing goods or services for a job, I can tether on my cell but I have to be aware of monthly data usage and there is a 25% chance I'll only get a 3G connection that is unreliable for my needs. Thanks!

My DSL internet is provided by Fairpoint Communications. I have the middle level of 3 levels of internet service. The \$50 (AND THE CRAZY FEEES & TAXES) fee has been constant for about 5 years, but I still feel its too expensive.

Thank you for your interest!

Affordability price includes home phone and internet.

Very little needs improvement. I keep a home phone because of this and internet, I would prefer to only have cell.

It would be nice to have a broadband service available in the area, as well as better cell service! Between home telephone, internet and cable, our house pays \$200/month for slow, spotty service. It would be nice to have a better quality service with competitive pricing, as our family has had in the past in other areas. Thank you

My property does not have a residence or business t the current time, but the will in the future I would support the the idea of a broadband service at this location in the future. Thanks.

We have access to the internet though Fairpoint Communications. They are the only show in town (no cable out

It would be better for us and our community to have more options in our chosing and quality of Internet providers.

Broadband needs to be fast enough for Skype, online videos. Fairpoint says we are too far from their nearest switching facility to get reliable service, and they have no plans to improve infrastructure. They need competition.

I am an author who writes mysteries and I really need quality reception for my computer and just as important

Grandkids occasionally use their computers.

Cell service is available approximately 1/4 mile from our home. We need to be able to access service.

Our DSL serves our needs currently. It's not great, but adequate.

What would be better is a cable package that includes TV, phone and internet, such as Time Warner.

I believe I could pay for faster DSL, but I feel I'm already paying enough. (Fairpoint)

If broadband is faster -- and affordable -- I'm for it.

Also streams music and video.

Would like a minimum speed of 15G (currently provided by Fairpoint Communications but not in my area) and preferably a speed in the 40-60 Gb rand or faster.

Fairpoint was horrible, now using a cell hot spot. Much better but limited data usage which limits what can be viewed on internet - i.e. movies, videos, music, etc.

By only having one provider that provides limited speed access, there is NO competition and the price and options are limited. The cost of satellite data is very expensive and restricted. It would be nice to have high speed. I work sometimes from home and my husband works entirely from home . The unreliability of the internet is frustrating.

Can only acquire dial-up at an unaffordable price so computer is down. Spouses smart phone (through Verizon) loses signal - weak

It would be nice to have choice in Rensselaer County (Stephentown)

Thank You!

I would like to see broadband extended to isolated mountanous areas like ours. I applaud and support your efforts. Good luck and full speed ahead!

It would undoubtedly increase my property taxes. They are too high already.

I would much rather they spent the money to pave my street.

The DSL service we currently use is through Fairpoint and is, to my knowledge, the only internet service available to us. It, along with the phone service itself, is unreliable at best.

We have had broadband/high speed in the past. Now we have Fairpoint and it SUCKS! Have written letters and spoken to management for years. Service is terrible.

Please bring us cable!!

We need to join the very modern world

It would be great if Time Warner would get cable in our area so that we would have great high speed for internet and better phone system. I know that the town hall and other businesses would love it also since they have problems from Fairpoint Communications.

Continuing medical education.

Business of professional medical consulting.

I will be 90 years old next month. I have never been around a computer nor have ever been interested in owning one. Therefore, this survey about high speed internet does not pertain to me.

We have DSL from Fairpoint Communications. The service is much slower than rated because we are over a thousand feet beyond the service area. If it weren't for this out-of-range service, however, we would have no broadband service. There is no cable service in Stephentown, so internet access via cable modem is not an option. Have checked out Hudson Valley Wireless, but they do not service our area. PLEASE HELP!

Use of the Internet and constant changes in technology are changing the way we communicate with each other - not all positive - also what is government doing to protect the safety and privacy of its citizens.

Would be willing to pay \$45 if it worked.

Stronger/better/consistent broadband availability is a huge priority in our household. I thank you for making this a priority.

Having spoken with many members of our local community, I know many who share our opinions.

I use an iPad for work. 801 NY 43 is in a Verizon black out area. Being in the antique auto restoration business, I'm constantly searching for obsolete parts. Lack of 4G puts me at a competitive disadvantage.

I also conduct fire department business on my iPad.

Furthermore, I have a voice disability which precludes telephone use. Kathy knows me.

Today I'm coordinating fire department recruiting for multiple departments via Eastwick Press and Berlin High School.

Since DSL is the only service available in my area at this time, it may be beneficial to give Taconic Telephone some incentives to invest in equipment to improve the speed on existing lines.

What we need is reliable service here.

This is a second home for us. Thank you!

We have internet/DSL bundled with phone from Fairpoint. The local infrastructure is crumbling and not being maintained or updated. Speed is slow and sometimes just too slow to use. When there are line problems, it always takes 2-4 days to send out a repair truck - who finds it is not on our property. Then another few days to get the cable crew to find and fix the rotten soot in the trunk.

Coopetitive pricing is essential - this is a monopoly and there are no choices. It is outrageous that such slow service is available. But because it is so slow, it's useless. We are selling our house because of this.

The internet service currently provided is extremely slow and you can not use two devices at the same time without excessive buffering. Even one device struggles on large formats.

A lot of the problems out here is if the wind blows or it rains or snows, you lose internet service and then you have to call Fairpoint and be on the phone for hours. Also, there's no service out here for certain cell phones.

Our service - land line phone and internet - is from Fairpoint. State/federal laws should be amended to permit Verizon or other to compete for this market. We would benefit but would they want to?

Affordability depends on speed.

In my case, DSL is available in Columbia County but too far away from the station to be worth while. I could get equivalent to dial-up for \$43 on top of my normal phone bill. It doesn't make sense this day and age. Please get broadband in the area!

We do not have a residence but we operate a remote energy service facility in Stephentown, NY. We rely on a business T1 line from Fairpoint. Poor reliability of the service cost our operation thousands of \$ each year.

Competition could lead to improved reliability.

Telephone (land line) often out!

After the millions of dollars already spent by Rensselaer County - we still do not have Emergency 800 signals at our home, nor do the fire and ambulance radios work!

That would be a bigger priority than broadband

Fairpoint provides my DSL service, but it is so slow it makes simple bill paying seem risky. Video streaming is usually impossible. However, every few months DSL service improves enough to allow constant streaming of YouTube videos. So, service could be adequate on existing phone lines if Fairpoint used the proper routers. Why can't the PSC force them to stop ripping off the public?

I have been trying to sell my house and lack of broadband/high speed internet is always an issue.

It is also an issue for me personally.

Please bring more reasonably priced internet to rural areas.

T-mobile cell phone doesn't work at property.

The internet service I get for \$90/month is bad, but I have no alternative. I would highly support any program designed to improve the quality and affordability of internet service.

I dread the occasions when I need to telecommute. My computer drops off or degrades frequently. Sometimes I switch to data on my phone via WiFi because it is faster. Faster internet would allow more businesses or businesses in general in the area. I've also had the internet drop out during courses where I had assignments due and had to apologize to professors and explain why it was late.

We have very limited options of suppliers in our rural area for internet services.

Would like to use internet for off-site cloud based data storage for disaster recovery.

The lack of broadband at our location limits our ability to make economical choices for data back up, data storage, VOIP, VPN and other internet based services. This affects our bottom line and ability to expand our business and hire additional people.

In our area the only choices for internet service is the telephone company (Fairpoint Communication Inc.) and satellite (very expensive). Other services like broadband could bring the cost down on all service that would be available.

Our cellphone service is adequate but not good. Internet service is DSL and okay when it works, but slow.

However it frequently has service interruptions.

I am on the board of the Stephentown Memorial Library and the service there in downtown Stephentown is so bad from Fairpoint that our staff often cannot complete basic tasks and the public cannot obtain adequate internet services.

High speed internet is a must. I don't actually work from home but occasionally must log into work to fix something. Otherwise it would be an hour ride. I would prefer a cheaper option.

In addition, the children of the area are being left behind not having the internet. It is the learning world of today.

Also uses a cellular hot spot.

Our residence on Gardner Hill Road in Stephentown is a 2nd home (primary residence is on Long Island). I will be retiring in July 2015 and will be spending a great deal more time in Stephentown than I do now. Having broadband access would be extremely important to my family and me, and any move to increase the availability of such access in our area would be greatly appreciated.

Add'l note - Thank you for conducting this survey. My family and I have spoken for a long time about the need to have internet access at our second home in Stephentown. As I noted in the survey, I will be retiring as of this July, and my family and I will now be spending more time in Stephentown than ever, so having broadband access at our house would be very important. We appreciate your efforts to expand broadband access in Rensselaer Stephentown residences and businesses would benefit from having a choice of providers for internet/phone. Bringing a cable/internet/phone company such as Time Warner to Stephentown would bring competition to FairPoint Communications and keep cost reasonable. I am the IT manager for a large multi-national company. We would love to have more options! Right now our only option is the phone company, Fairpoint, and have learned that we over pay for what we have by a significant amount. Please, it would be such a great thing for our family and our town.

I own and rent through VRBO two properties in Stephentown. It is essential to my guests that internet services are available and reliable. In addition, my daughter is a consultant who works at home and reliable internet service are essential if she is to visit me.

Finally, I think that Stephentown would be a good site for a call center or fulfillment business but stable?,

Fairpoint Communications is a poor provider of internet service.

Two fifty eight Black River Road is a seasonal residence - summer & fall only. I use only a cell phone - no internet. The reception on the phone is excellent.

The difference between the service we have on Long Island and Rensselaer County is unbelievable. I had to ask my neighbor if something was wrong with my service it is soo slow! A lot of people didn't even realize they are 5 years behind on this service.

Fairpoint service - at best - is spotty. Our DSL connection allows 1 or 2 in our household to stream something at the same time. Anything else, the service slows to a crawl. After 3:30, presumably when others in the neighborhood are home from work and school, the service is so slow. Upgrading to a higher speed does not raise the speed during peak times PLUS Fairpoint has the worst customer service! We often drive to a neighboring town so that my children's homework can be submitted in time on line.

DSL Internet up time important

Also does video

My biggest complaint is that the only internet service in my area is through Fairpoint. They charge \$45/month for the basic internet service, BUT you must have a land line in order to receive the internet service and that costs an ADDITIONAL \$30.60/month. It disconnects often. Dissatisfied with their service and annoyed at their monopoly in our area.

I work in a high-tech field. I increasingly telecommute. I have one, and one only, internet option through my phone company. The service is adequate at best. Publically provided broadband (real broadband as seen in other countries) is a must if America and particularly in our rural communities if we are to preserve them as viable places to live.

There is Internet available thru Fairpoint Communications.

But you have to be a customer of theirs and pay way more than it is worth.

If their internet worked as it should, they wouldn't mind paying.

Don't Let your Town be Left Behind!

Currently, the only internet services provider is our phone company, Fairpoint. Since we have 2 cell phones, there is no need to pay for a home phone. However, we can't get internet service without a home phone. So use our cell phones for internet, which limits the amount of time we can afford to be online. We need to do research and medical communication for our son who is sick, so the time constraints that we have are very limiting. In the future, our kids will need to be online for school.

We need to have affordable broadband - even filing taxes, medical procedures, everything requires some internet usage. Thank you!

This is the 21st Century!

Thank you for your interest in improving our service. Telephone service in general is poor with frequent transformer failure in severe weather resulting in power failure.

Fairpoint says my internet speed will not be improved as I live outside of their mandated area. No other service is available here. Monopoly!

I recently disconnected my home phone and Fairpoint raised my rate by \$5 for internet service. I really don't feel this is fair but without cable internet available they are pretty much a monopoly :-{ (sad face)

I had used a satellite (Hughes Net) before DSL and I found that to be a lot more expensive and more unreliable.

People with cell phones cannot use them at our location.

My husband tells me we do have broadband! But it is slow and disconnects often.

Also has a cellular hotspot.

I teach at RPI but the slow internet speed limits what we can do.. Our DSL gets 1.2 Mb/s maximum whereas my 4G (AT&T) "personal hotspot" gets 15 Mb/s. It is much faster, but too expensive. Good broadband access would greatly help my student children as well.

Stephentown, NY is extremely disadvantaged by poor internet service, dropping bandwidth, spotty service & only 1 provider -- Fairpoint. We need help and increasing options to thrive in today's connected world.

Don't care about the price, just make it work effectively.

How ironic that I am sitting in our apartment in New York City filling out this questionnaire instead of at our real home on Horse Heaven Road. Both my wife and I are professionals - I am an illustrator and my wife, Terri, is a psychotherapist and motivational coach and speaker. Since moving to our home in the winter of 2004 we have witnessed an extraordinary increase in demands on internet service and a corresponding decrease in internet provider quality. Our one and only provider for DSL service, as there was no option for cable, was Fairpoint, formerly Taconic Communications. It provided such increasingly dismal, inconsistent and frustrating service that we switched to satellite service via Hughes Net last year (still maintaining our phone service through Fairpoint). Hughes Net has proven to be equally deficient and ultimately more costly than we could have imagined. The delays from satellite transmission have completely ruined Skyping, Viber or any online visual chatting or conferencing.

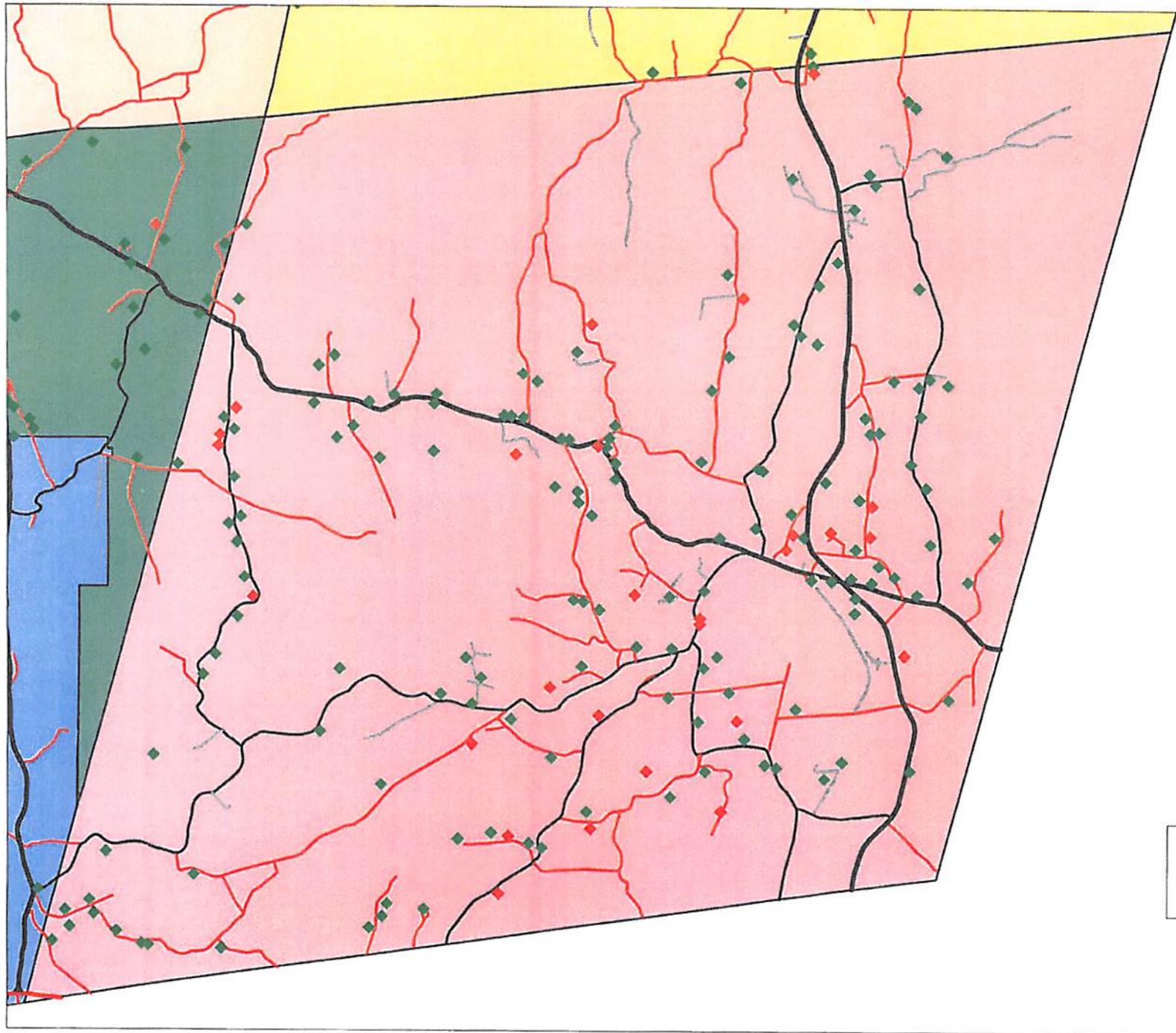
We have called on many occasions the various services inquiring about any upgrade in broadband for our area (apparently we fall out of cable and high quality DSL line range). Unfortunately, there is no competition among the services as we are considered an area not worth investing in. That leaves us with only one player as per DSL and satellite. And there obviously is no motivation to improve a very costly service when there is no competition.

We are greatly distressed by the continued and unresolved problems with our internet service. As we both rely

Reliable internet service is a basic necessity in this day and age, if any municipality expects to grow and expand their tax base. I sincerely hope we move into that direction as it is currently sadly behind the times. No reason why we can't keep old fashioned country living with new technology. It's not really new - we're sadly behind the times. (Fingers crossed!)

May 2015
Rural
Broadband
Survey,
Rensselaer
County,
New York

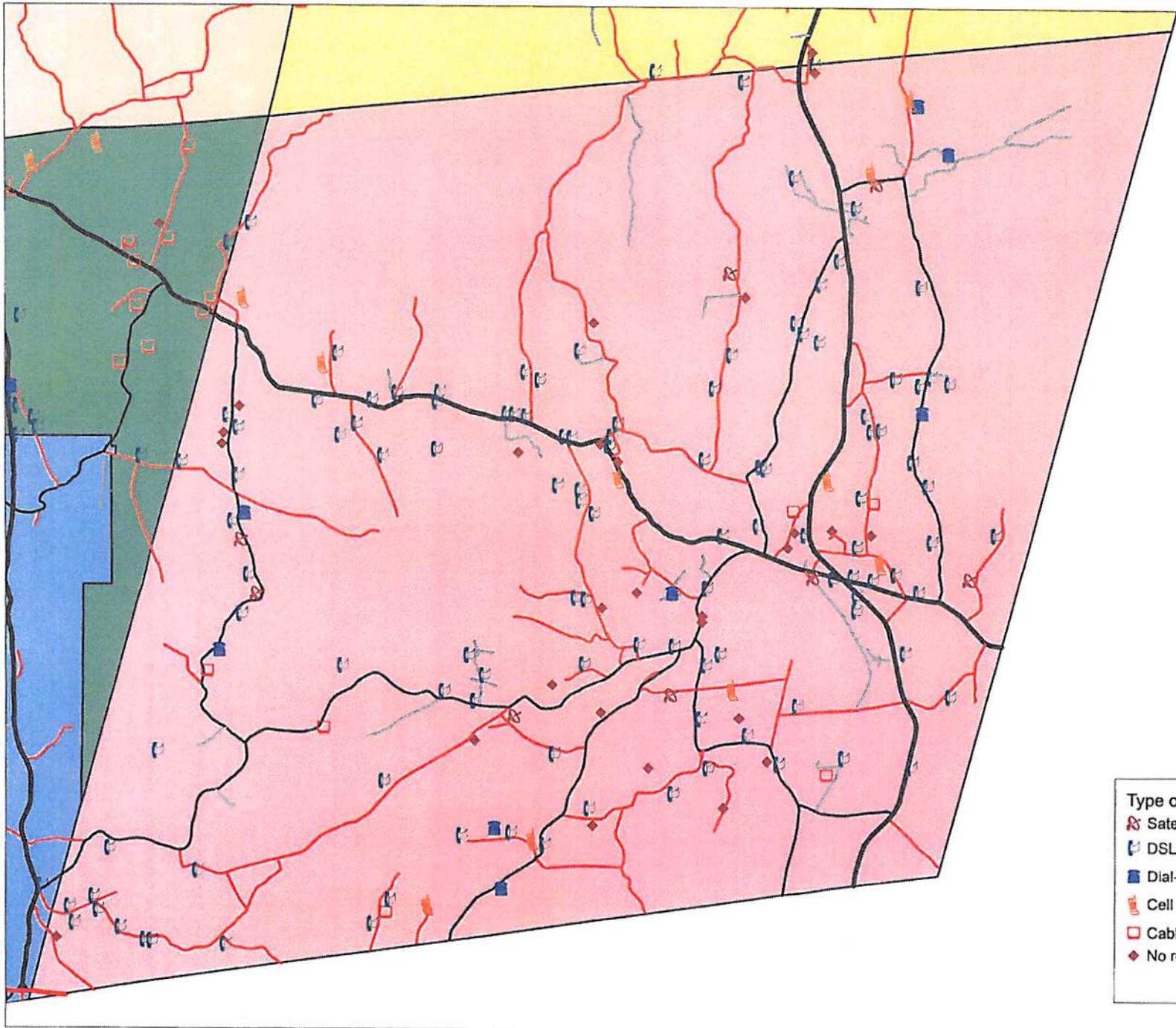
Town of
Stephentown



Internet Service at Address
◆ No Internet Service
◆ Have Internet Service

May 2015
Rural
Broadband
Survey,
Rensselaer
County,
New York

Town of
Stephentown

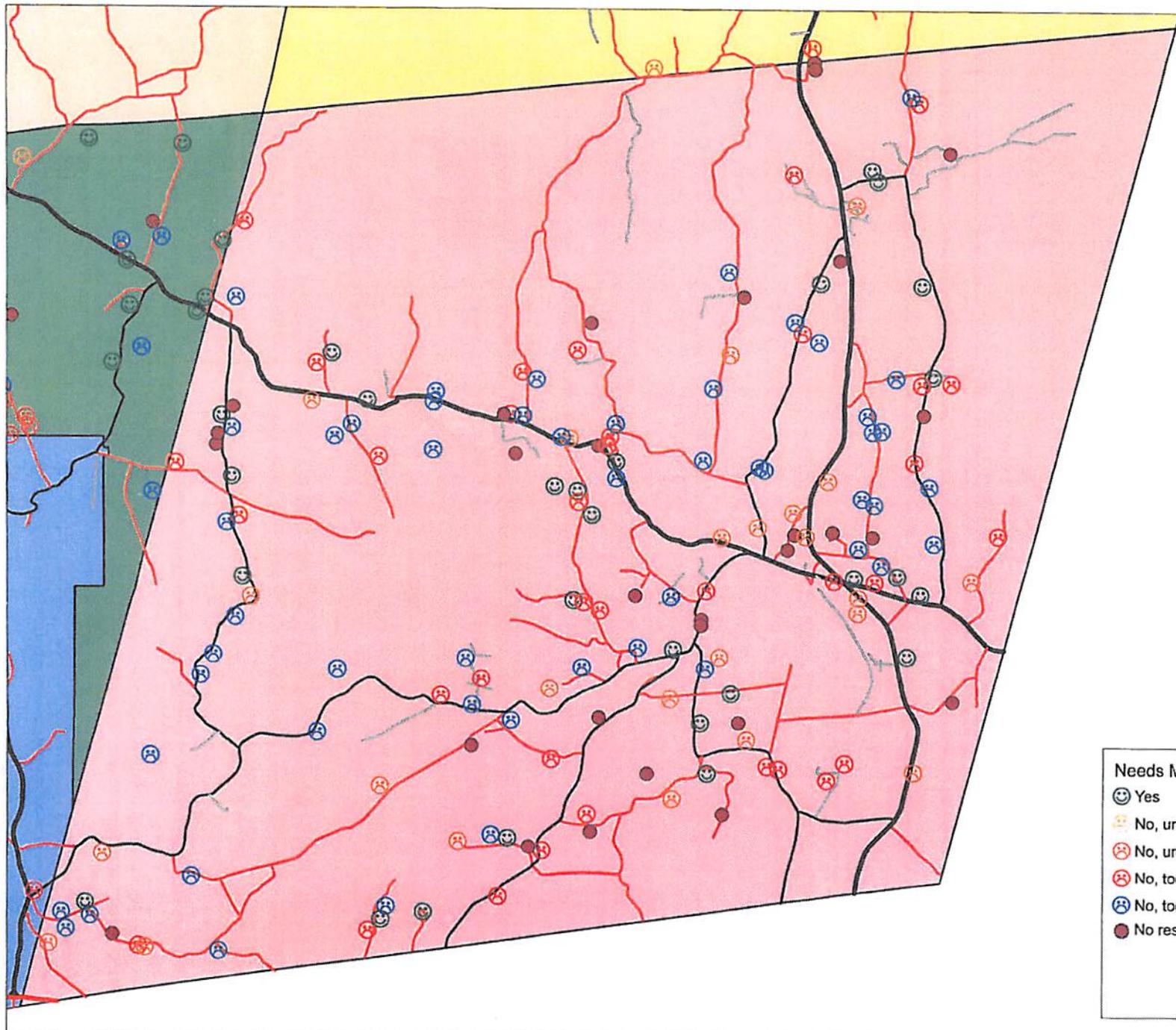


Type of Internet Service

- ☒ Satellite
- ☒ DSL
- ☒ Dial-up
- ☒ Cell Hot-spot
- ☒ Cable Modem
- ◆ No response to question

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Town of
Stephentown



- Needs Met by Provider
- Yes
 - No, unreliable, Yes
 - No, unreliable
 - No, too slow, No, unreliable
 - No, too slow
 - No response to question