



Legislation Text

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Broadband Efforts: Lakes Region Broadband Partnership and Cumberland County. Bringing broadband to Windham, and the region, was identified in the 2015-2018 strategic plan as goal 13.3.1, “Participate in Municipal Broadband Initiative”:

Participate in Municipal Broadband Initiative to bring gigabit Internet speeds to Windham and the Lakes Region as an enabling technology. WEDC included \$10,000 in its annual budget for 2016 to fund an initial scoping study.

Around the country, local, regional, and state efforts have been coming together to bring broadband to their communities as an enabling technology, as important to economic vitality and prosperity in the 21st century as electricity and telephones were in the 20th century. The “Municipal Broadband Initiative” has evolved into the Lakes Region Broadband Partnership (LRBP) and includes the towns of Windham, Standish, Raymond, and Gray, though St. Joseph’s College also has been part of the dialogue and supported the effort to meet some of their digital infrastructure needs.

Most recently the partnership worked with Axiom Technologies, a company specializing in bringing broadband to rural, unserved, and under-served areas, to conduct a feasibility study to extend a fiber backbone from the “3-Ring Binder” location in Standish. In addition, Cumberland County has identified the need for gigabit Internet throughout the county, taking an active leadership role in that effort and collaborating with the LRBP in its work.

In this update the Council will hear from representatives of Axiom, Cumberland County, the Windham Economic Development Corporation, and other stakeholders in the effort, addressing the following points:

- Why are we doing this?
- What are the business needs?
- What is digital inclusion and what are our goals?
- Describing the project and results so far
- Cumberland County’s role in the regional effort
- Next steps
 - Similar conversations in Raymond, Gray, and Standish - the other partners in the Lakes Region Broadband Partnership
 - Completing Cumberland County’s current scope of work
 - Public outreach, education and awareness
 - Bring LRBP communities and Cumberland County together in the fall to make decisions about whether/how/in what form to proceed
 - Continue to seek funding opportunities, private as well as public