



Vermont Telecommunications Plan

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Vision

While the state's regulatory authority over telecommunications has diminished, its interest in maintaining affordable and reliable service has not. As this Plan looks to the state's telecommunications future, it is important to have a sense of what that future should look like. The Department views the following goals as an essential part of supporting and growing a reliable telecommunications network throughout the state of Vermont.

1. **Broadband Speed.** Every address¹² in Vermont should have broadband Internet access with the minimum technical requirements of 4 megabits per second (Mbps) download and 1 Mbps upload. By year end 2020, a majority of addresses in Vermont should have access to the Internet at speeds of at least 100 Mbps symmetrical, and every address should have access to speeds of at least 10 Mbps download. By 2024, every address should have broadband with minimum technical requirements of 100 Mbps symmetrical.
2. **Broadband Deployment.** Every address in Vermont should have access to wired and wireless broadband Internet access service.
3. **Affordability.** Broadband service should be affordable to all customer classes.
4. **Local Public Generated Content.** The state should promote locally generated content that is used and useful to communities.
5. **Adoption and Usage.** Vermont should support the universal adoption and use of broadband service at home and at work.
6. **Mobile Service.** Vermont should have universal availability of mobile service along travel corridors and near universal availability statewide.
7. **Basic Service.** Vermont should have reliable, economical telephone service in all areas of the state, including rural areas. All residents, regardless of income or location, should have access to basic telephone service.
8. **Enhanced 911.** Vermont should have available the best possible E-911 service. The state should endeavor to find greater efficiencies within the e-911 system while maintaining and enhancing public safety.
9. **Competition.** Vermont's telecommunications marketplace should be competitive, and all Vermonters should reap the benefits of competition.
10. **Regulatory Fairness.** Like services should be regulated alike, regardless of the platform or technology used to provide the service.

12. "Address" means E-911 residential and business locations.

To meet Vermont's telecommunications goals, the following strategies should be pursued:

1. Vermont should **provide universal service support for broadband build out projects**. Vermont should require that all projects receiving public monies meet the minimum technical objectives set by the Department of Public Service.
2. Vermont should **encourage the expansion of commercial mobile radio service** by maintaining the existing permitting process for telecommunications facilities.
3. Vermont should **continue its wireless and broadband mapping initiatives** with or without federal support.
4. Vermont, through the Public Service Board, should **examine existing cable line extension rules, and the pole attachment dispute resolution process**.
5. Vermont should **assess the value of public access stations to the communities they serve** and explore new ways in which local content can be cost effectively generated and disseminated to consumers.
6. The Department of Public Service and Public Service Board **should continue a regulatory framework that facilitates competition, while assuring** affordable basic service rates, high quality of service, consumer protection, and **universal service**.
7. Vermont policy makers should carefully **consider the potential negative outcomes of state and municipalities directly competing with private firms in the provision of telecommunications services**, especially in areas where consumers are adequately served. Vermont should refrain from policies, including financial incentives, that have the net effect of diminishing competitive choice in the marketplace.
8. The state should **refrain from enacting laws that regulate like services differently**. Vermont policy makers should advocate for national reform measures that regulate substitutable platforms similarly. As cross-platform competition increases, the state and national regulatory framework should equally regulate all service providers without regard to the way in which service is provisioned.
9. Vermont should **stimulate demand for broadband service by promoting skills training programs and instituting policies for reducing the cost of broadband service** for low income families.

How this Plan is Organized

Vermont law directs the Department to prepare a plan addressing five subjects. This document follows that format, providing readers with chapters that address the statutory criteria in turn, along with additional information on the cost of deploying state-of-the-art broadband