

High Speed Internet Service for Steel Creek

March 2024 Update

During our 2023 Annual Meeting a question regarding conduit being laid along Springbrook Lane led to a discussion of High-Speed Internet Service for Steel Creek residents. Robin & Siobhan Baloochi advised that they engaged Comporium to bring high speed cable (service hovers between 350-600 mbps download and 20+ up) from 350 Springbrook Ln to their new residence. Comporium required that the extension of the overhead High-Speed Cable be underground according to their current requirements and easements had to be obtained from neighbors along the right of way in Springbrook. The Board agreed to investigate the potential of getting access to High-Speed Internet for all Steel Creek Lots.

A survey of Steel Creek Owners indicated that while some are using Comporium DSL Service for their internet most that have a line of sight to the Rich Mountain Tower have subscribed to Sky Runner Broad Band Wireless Internet which has service options that provides an adequate signal for streaming purposes. However, Comporium DSL Service may not provide satisfactory service for today's internet use.

Subsequently, the Board has had numerous contacts with Comporium and Transylvania County officials regarding the announced Federal Grant Funds to bring High Speed Internet to rural North Carolina. Both Comporium and Transylvania County confirmed that they have been successful in receiving Grants. However, a scoring system is used by Grantmakers in which numerous criteria are assigned a value and these scores are combined to give an overall score to the Project. The projects with the highest scores are typically funded. Grants are generally awarded six months after the application and then Comporium has up to two years to complete the installation.

The Board provided detailed information on our Steel Creek Subdivision to Comporium including existing homes and distances between homes to receive a proposal of costs that could be submitted for Grant consideration. Its Business Development Team came back indicating that our Subdivision was a very expensive build and even on a 20-year horizon would require an Aid in Construction contribution from Steel Creek of \$220,000 payable during the construction period.

In a follow-up discussion held last month with Sheila Carland, General Manager Comporium, we indicated that the cost was more than our POA could pay directly, but that we were interested and would support an application for a Grant for the Federal Dollars available for such projects. She confirmed that Comporium is extremely interested in replacing its DSL services in Steel Creek. We suggested that Comporium consider reducing the cost by utilizing the Duke Power poles that its DSL and phone lines are attached to for the cable and requested that Comporium include the Steel Creek Project in their next Grant Application; however, we do not have any confirmation that this has happened. The Board will continue to follow this initiative.

This report is intended as an update on an ongoing initiative and not a conclusion.