

# SPOTLIGHT

ON SHENANDOAH

Fall 2016

## Internet Service In Shenandoah



Residents in the City have experienced poor internet speeds, service interruptions and high cost with their internet service. In order to address these recurring complaints, the City conducted a survey of residents and began investigating the problem for possible solutions. They discovered several contributing factors including multiple providers in the city offering different levels of service and an aging infrastructure. To meet the needs of the residents, the City is exploring fiber to the home (FTTH) as an option for uniform and improved service across all areas.

### What is it?

Fiber to the home is the delivery of internet service over an optical fiber from the service provider's equipment all the way to a home or business, thereby replacing the outdated copper equipment. Fiber to the home would provide a minimum of ten times the performance of the current infrastructure. Availability of this service has also been shown to increase the marketability of property.

## What's involved?

To bring fiber to the home, conduit must be installed in areas of the City where it does not currently exist. The proposed installation would be performed in the right-of-way using directional drilling, which for most residents will be within five to ten feet of the curb. Only after a resident signs up for service would the fiber be run into the home and connected to a modem. They would then connect their router to the modem to provide high speed service for their entire house.

Following a survey of residents and feedback from town hall meetings, the City issued a request for qualifications for possible fiber to the home providers. Since the service area is small, some providers had no interest. Tachus Fiber Broadband responded with their qualifications and have met with the City's internet committee several times to address questions and other technical items.

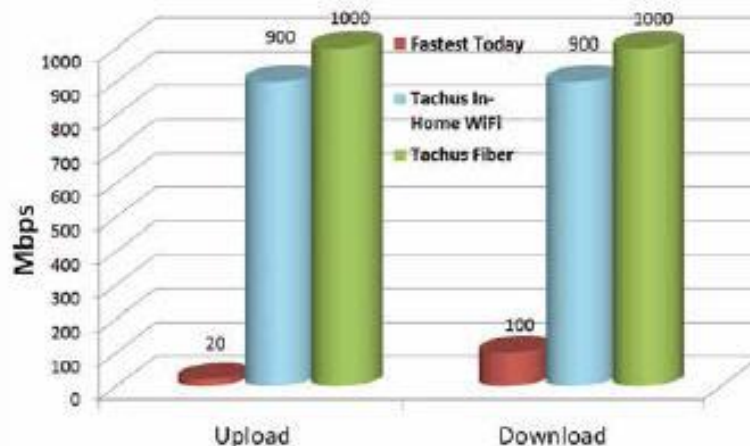
## What are the benefits?

Different people have different things in mind when they talk about FTTH. Engineers talk about bandwidth, as if the raw capacity to move bits and bytes of data is an end in itself. Consumers think about products and services that bandwidth can provide now.

Political leaders, corporate economists and academics often have a third view: bandwidth as publicly available infrastructure; a utility that makes it easier for people to develop new products or start entirely new businesses. Public infrastructure also makes private property more valuable. For example, a house is generally worth much more if it has access to a public street, water, and sewer services, public schools and other utilities than one that does not have such access.

- FTTH is the only technology that will deliver enough bandwidth, reliably and at a low enough cost to meet consumer demands of today and into the next decade.
- FTTH is affordable now.
- FTTH is also the only technology that will meet the needs of the foreseeable future, when 3D, "holographic" high-definition television and games (products already in use and on the drawing boards at big consumer electronics firms) will be in everyday use. Think 20 to 30 Gigabits per second in a decade. Copper can't do even 1/1000 of that bandwidth, and then not for more than a few hundred yards.
- FTTH will enable products that we have yet to conceive of, but that we are certain will become necessities for living well and working well in the decades ahead.

## Performance Difference





## What about cost?

The estimated cost to subscribers is \$100 per month. The internet committee is working through some of the remaining questions and any legal issues that need to be reviewed. One of these questions is how the residents want the City to pay for installation of the conduit, which is estimated to be around \$1.5 million. If the project is deemed feasible, more information will be made available to residents and potential providers will be submitted for City Council approval.

## Charter Committee

As Shenandoah approaches a population of 5,000 residents in the near future, the City can transition to a Home Rule



government structure. In simple terms, home rule is the right of citizens at the grassroots level to manage their own affairs with minimum interference from the state. Home rule assumes that governmental problems should be solved at the level closest to the people. Shenandoah is currently a General Law city and is restricted to doing what the state directs or permits it to do. Home Rule cities look to the state for guidance on what they are prohibited from doing, rather than having to comply with specific authorities granted by the state.

In preparation for a possible transition to Home Rule, the City has formed a committee of residents to assist in drafting a charter. The charter is a document that will create the governmental structure and determine the distribution of power and responsibilities among the branches of government. It must ultimately be approved by voters to take effect, along with any future changes.

## Inherent Powers of Home Rule

- Government structure, such as mayor-council or council-manager is left to voter discretion
  - Citizens have total discretion over administrative structure
  - Cities have independent annexation power
  - Voters have the power of initiative, where they can propose legislation
  - Voters can repeal existing ordinances using referendum power
  - Recall power allows voters to remove city council members before their terms expire
  - Provide for election of council members at large, by single member districts, or by place
  - Determine if the mayor will be elected by voters, selected from members of council, or chosen by another method
  - Set terms of office for city council members
- The government of a home rule city cannot act on any matter which has been previously determined by the state. Furthermore, when a charter provision conflicts with state law, the state law controls.

## The Charter

The Charter is the most important document for Home Rule. It usually contains the following provisions:

- Description of the city's governmental and proprietary powers
- Description of the city's governmental structure (mayor-council, council-manager, etc.)
- Organizational structure of the city's administration and the means to finance its operations
- Procedures of city council and advisory boards and commissions, procedures for granting franchise, assessing/collecting taxes, and annexations
- Controls over city government, such as elections, referenda, initiative, and recall
- Procedures for amending the Charter



## Government Structure

Home rule cities operate under one of two forms of government, with 87 percent having the council-manager form.

- **Mayor-Council** – the mayor-council form of government has two variations: strong-mayor and weak-mayor. The scope of the mayor's role varies between the two forms.
- **Council-Manager** – under the council-manager structure, voters elect a city council, which then hires a city manager to administer the day-to-day operations. The council serves as a legislative body that sets policy, approves the budget and sets the tax rate.

The Charter Committee will begin meeting in late 2016 to discuss the basics of how they will proceed.

## City Communications

The City uses multiple methods to reach residents and businesses with information about city government, special events, crime alerts and any other relevant news. Currently, the following methods are used:

- City web site – [shenandoahtx.us](http://shenandoahtx.us)
- Facebook page – Shenandoah, TX
- Twitter - @ShenandoahTx
- Instagram – [visitshenandoahtx](http://visitshenandoahtx)
- Constant Contact – sign up on the City's web site using the City Communication link on the home page
- Community Signs – posted throughout the City and in front of City Hall
- Quarterly newsletter – mailed directly to residential addresses



## Smart911

The City recently changed to Smart911 for emergency alerts.

Sign up on the City's web site using the City Communication

link on the home page, or go directly to [smart911.com](http://smart911.com). The Smart911 system allows subscribers set up a profile including their home address, names of family members residing there, all telephone numbers, and any medical conditions or other relevant information that may be needed during an emergency. In a crisis situation, people who call 911 may be panicked, unable to communicate, or it may be unsafe to communicate. The information in their profile would help first responders get to the right place quickly and with more complete information. Details provided in personal profiles are secure and only displayed to a dispatcher if a call is made to 911 from a number provided in the profile. By setting up a profile in Smart911, subscribers will also be able to receive emergency alerts and notifications from state and local authorities.

Visit the City's web site and use the "City Communication" link on the home page to register for Smart911. To learn more, go to [www.smart911.com](http://www.smart911.com).



## Holiday Safety Tips

### Shopping:

- Lock your car at all times, secure valuables and avoid leaving personal property in plain sight
- Be aware of your surroundings, take precautions especially at night
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash
- Avoid online shopping sites you don't know or that have prices that are too good to be true
- Watch out for phony ads on auction websites or eCards that route to another site
- Arrange for package deliveries to be picked up by a neighbor or family member if you are away from home

### Decorating:

- Inspect electrical connections and power cords on all decorations
- Minimize the use of extension cords; use one long cord instead of multiple smaller ones
- Avoid covering extension cords with a rug or floor mat
- Avoid leaving lit candles unattended

### Trash:

- Avoid leaving large boxes from expensive items out by the trash as they draw the attention of thieves; break or fold them up instead
- Dispose of real Christmas trees at the City's designated site or another recycling center

## Raymond Shaw Appointed Police Chief

City Council appointed Raymond Shaw as Chief of the Shenandoah Police Department in their October 26 meeting. Shaw began as a patrol officer at Shenandoah and has steadily advanced at the City over 19 years. He has worked closely with the City Administrator over the last month to evaluate programs and services and to develop a framework for plans going forward. He has a long history in law enforcement and currently holds a Master Peace Officer certification and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Organizational Leadership.





## Important Dates:

November 29, 2016 – Lighting of the Angels  
December 24, 2016 – Lighting of the Luminaries  
January 21, 2017 – Polar Bear Plunge  
March 3-4, 2017 – Community Garage Sale  
March 4, 2017 – Arbor Day  
March 25, 2017 – Trash Bash  
April 8, 2017 – Easter Egg Hunt