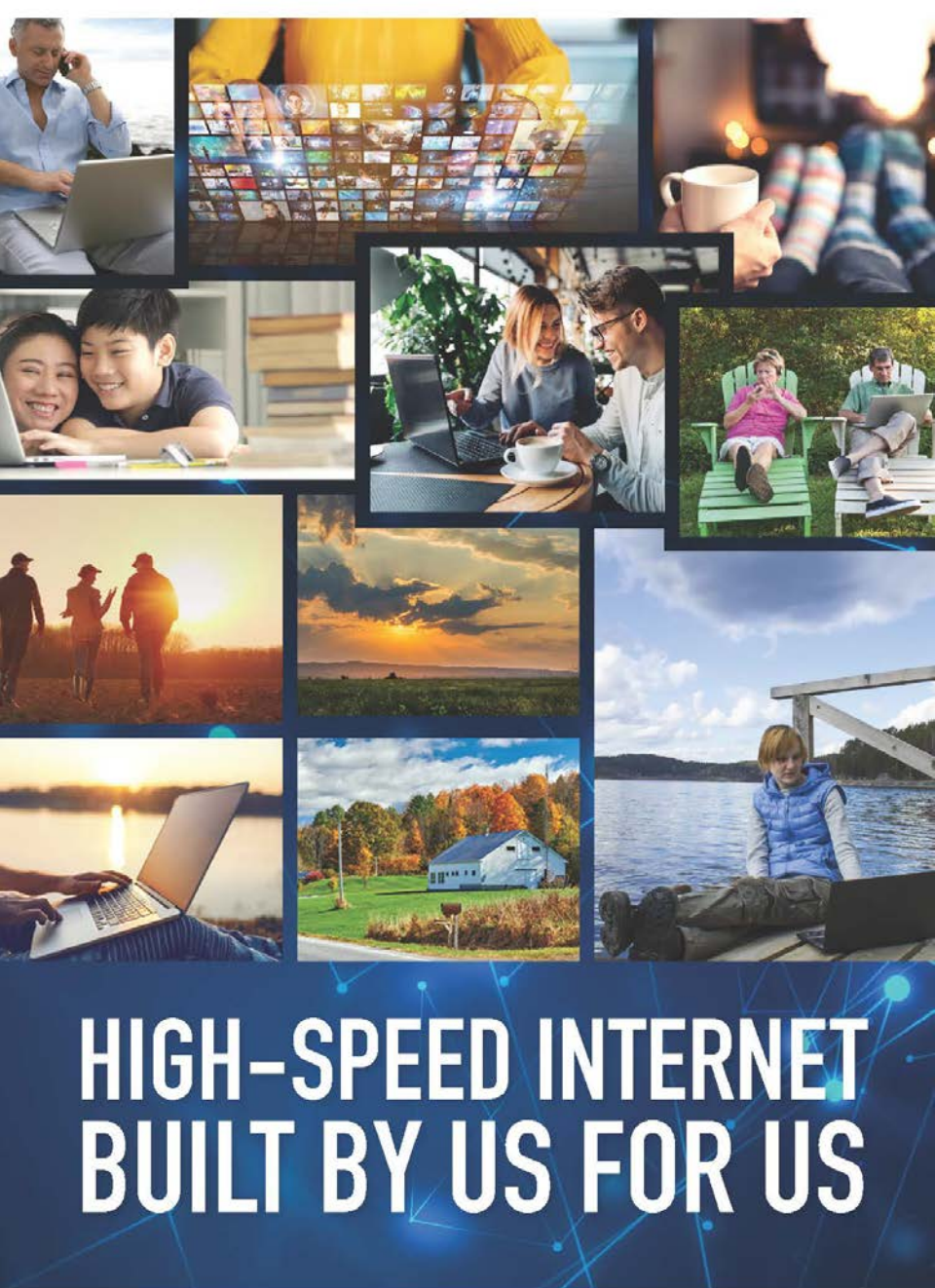# Rural Broadband Network

MUNICIPALITY
OF PICTOU COUNTY

What Are We Doing?

We are building a High-Speed Internet Network like no other in Atlantic Canada. It will be fast, reliable and available to everyone.

It will allow for everyday use such as streaming movies and working from home, but it will also be a data utility that will create a permanent and long-lasting telecommunication infrastructure that will serve as an economic development tool and improve the quality of life for our citizens.

"The Internet is becoming the town square of the global village of tomorrow." – Bill Gates

A Little Background

We started this rural broadband project about 6 years ago because council was hearing from frustrated residents about the lack of quality internet service in rural Pictou County.

Council agreed it was time to make a difference by building its own network, but it wanted control over it rather than handing over money to internet service providers and relying on them to upgrade their own infrastructure.

Request for proposals went out and a consortium of companies experienced in building networks was formed.

We are Building a Network

Council said this network needed to be the best that is available and include both fibre and wireless options. It also had to be an Open Access Network.

This means the MOPC is putting fibre on the poles and towers up and in turn leasing it to internet service providers who will provide residents with high-speed internet.
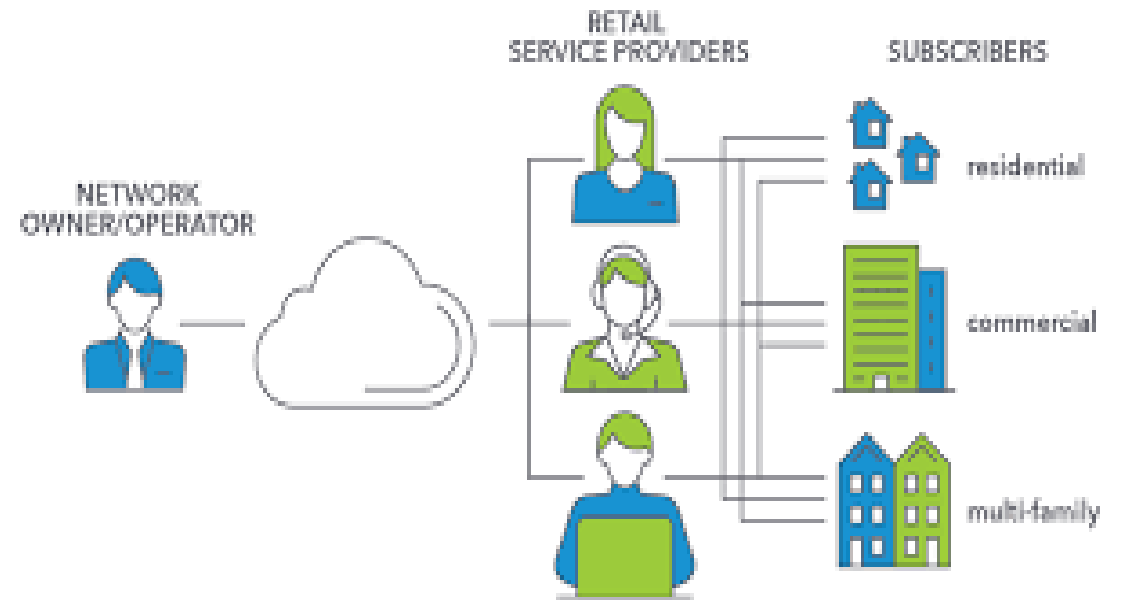
The MOPC will generate revenue by leasing its infrastructure to internet service providers and that revenue will go towards the cost of building and maintaining the network.

Down the Open Road We Go

Think of our network as a toll-highway, so that the users (internet service providers) pay to use our infrastructure to provide residents high-speed internet.

Open Access means the highway is open to everyone, not one service provider. Service providers will be announced on our website at www.ruralnet.munpict.ca in addition to mail out information.

The Nuts and Bolts of the Network

To build an Open Access, High-Speed Network in Pictou County that includes fibre and wireless infrastructure, we need:

1123 Kilometres of Fibre Optics AND
17 Tower Sites

Minimum Speeds generated:
Wireless 5 Mbps upload,
25Mbps download
Fibre- 10 Mbps upload
50 Mpbs download

Never Build a Network in a Pandemic

We hit the ground running by working with our consortium team on marketing, design and permitting.

And then March 2020 arrived, and things slowed down considerably, but we continued with work behind the scenes.

There have been delays and one of our biggest challenges has been paperwork on the fibre side of the project.

We do not own poles on the side of the road for the fibre. This means we need permission from companies that do own them. For every pole, a permit must be submitted for approval. Each permit approval requires the companies to inspect the poles and do the necessary maintenance. We are dealing with 1123 km of the roadway so this involves a lot of poles.

Companies are also getting caught up with their own work following the pandemic, so this leaves important parts of our project on a list of things to do with many other items.

We have seen some progress this spring with fibre in the Lyons Brook area and our first tower was installed at our MOPC building.

Signs of Hope

We received $4.46 million from the federal government Federal Government's Universal Broadband Fund Rapid Response Program in the spring of 2020. We are continuing to apply for more federal government assistance.

MOPC Council first committed $11-million to the project for the first phase.

When it was decided to expand the amount of fibre from 1/3 to 2/3 for the project, Council committed $25 million for the first phase.

As the project progressed, Council has committed $54-million which is expected to cover all costs.
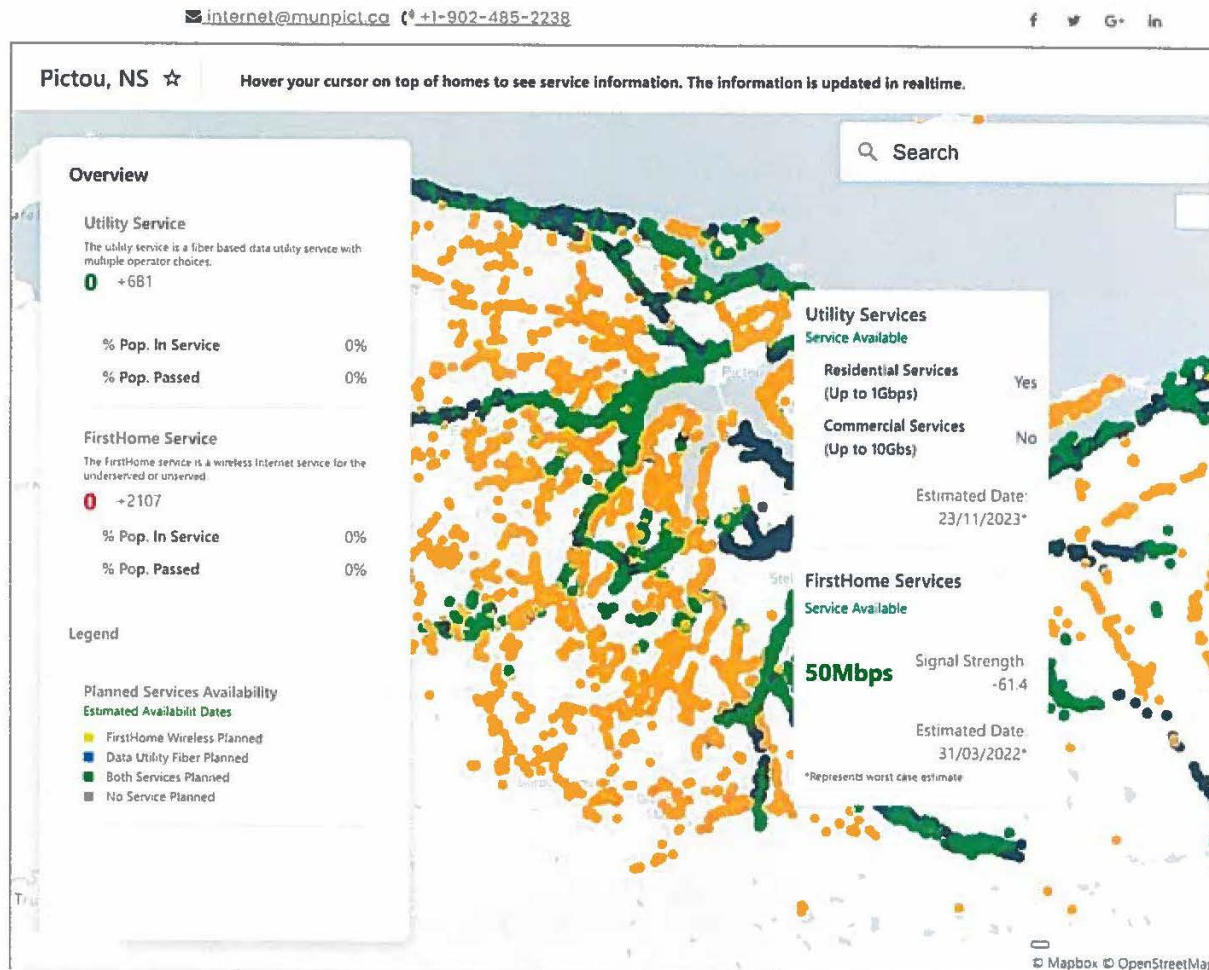
New Infrastructure attracts New Growth

Municipalities collect most of their revenue through property taxes. So, growth is good because it allows municipalities to pay for new infrastructure.

The MOPC's Rural Broadband Project is considered infrastructure and the price tag is larger than most of our projects, but all infrastructure comes at a cost.

However, the difference with this project is that it is expected to generate revenue that will in turn go towards its construction costs and maintenance.

When and Where?

A new website has been created to keep people up-to-date on all our progress. www.ruralnet.munpict.ca

On this will find a LIVE MAP that will allow you to see what type of service you will be provided, the speed of the service and expected due dates.
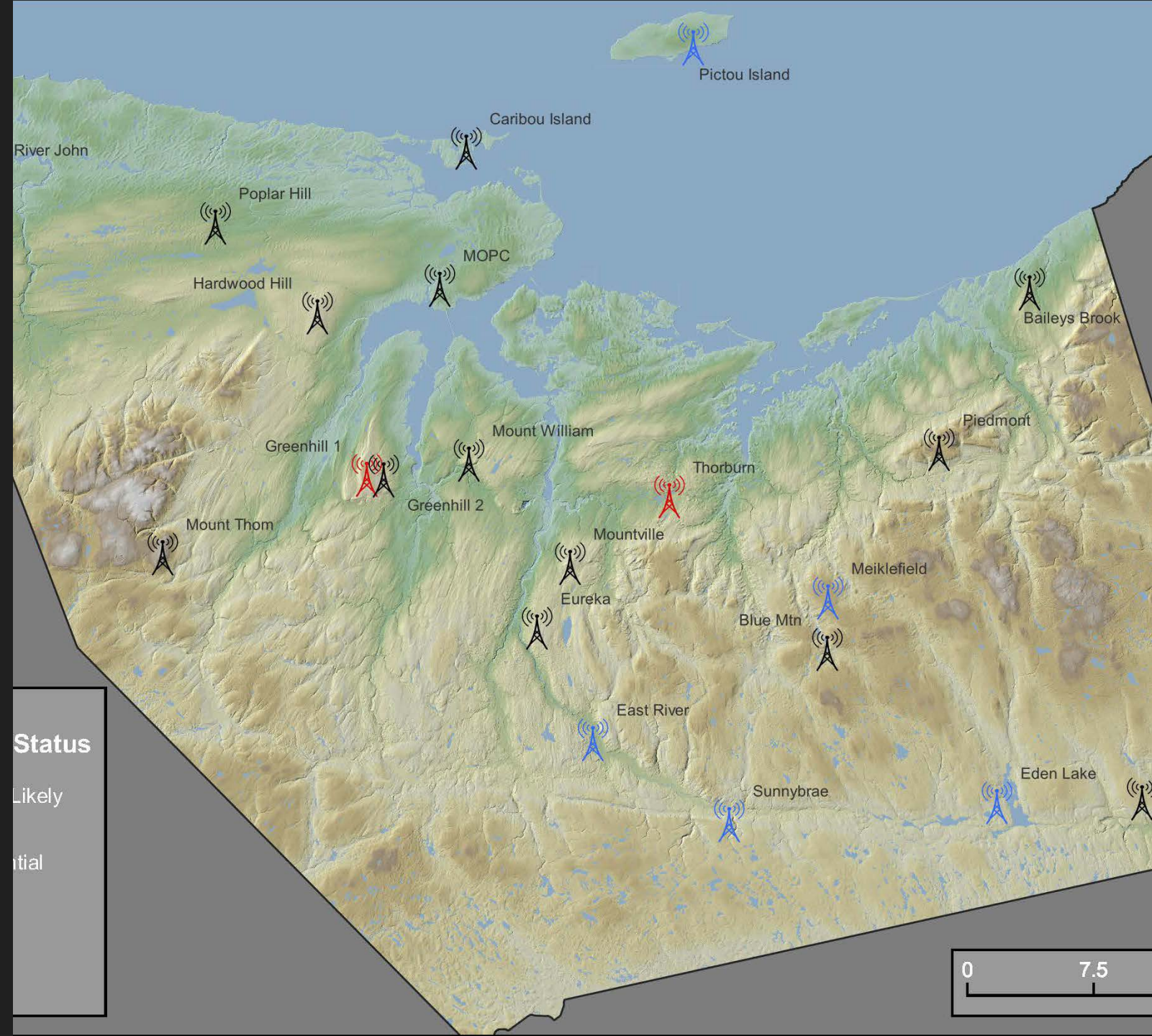
We will also be doing mailouts when the service is ready for hook up in your area.

Boots on the Ground

In December 2021, we had fibre on poles in the Lyons Brook area.

We need to start here because a considerable amount of work must be done to our own Administration Building which will be the hub of the Network.

Towers started being installed in April 2022.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Now that the project is in the construction phase, we are confident things will progress quickly.

The wireless service should be completed and operational for everyone that is eligible by end of this summer.

Fibre service is expected to be operational by end of 2023 for the majority of Pictou County.

As we roll out the Network through the county, we will be able to hook residents up as we go.

The Burning Questions

How much will it cost me to use this Network?
The cost of wireless service is estimated at $50 a month without an installation fee. The cost of fibre service is expected to come in at $130 a month.

When will I receive service? The Live Map on www.ruralnet.munpict.ca will give you an approximation of time. Wireless service is expected to be available by end of summer and fibre by end of 2023 to most residents.

How will I know when I am available for service? Check your mailbox for information and our website at www.ruralnet.munpict.ca. Updates will be provided as they are available.

Can you tell me when it is coming to my district? Not specifically. It depends on a lot of moving parts including permit approvals, availability of work crews, product shipment, etc. The good news is that when we know you will know because we want to have you hooked up as quickly as possible.

Contact Us

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