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## **Grandview Peaks POA Internet Informational Guide**

The issue of access to truly high-speed, affordable and reliable internet service has been a topic of interest for virtually all Grandview Peaks residents.

Many parts of North Carolina simply have no high-speed internet access, so Grandview Peaks is fortunate to offer Frontier internet service to all property owners. Although what once viewed as “high speed” when Grandview Peaks first opened, today the DSL service from Frontier is considered by many substandard – particularly for those who have a need to work at home or would like to stream video.

And while new technologies are becoming available to provide better service, Grandview Peaks residents have discovered several ways to improve what they had, at least as an interim step until even better solutions are available. This document provides an overview of these alternatives. Understand, however, in a mountain community some of these are site-specific. Depending on a home’s location, elevation and direction these may or may not be viable alternatives, but are certainly worth exploring.

### **Frontier:**

Currently, the only “connected” internet solution communitywide is Frontier’s DSL service, which many find is limited to (roughly) 2-3 mb/second speeds. By today’s standards, this is hardly considered “high speed.” While many find this unsatisfactory, it is the level of service everybody “bought into” when they decided to purchase within Grandview Peaks, and nonetheless represents a baseline that many mountain communities simply don’t have. It’s something. It’s better than nothing. But by today’s standards, not ideal. Some residents with homes physically located near the entrance gate have had success in petitioning Frontier to “tweak” their service or equipment to deliver high speeds – reported as high as 60 mb/second. However, this adjustment is not uniform and not available the farther your home is from the gate.

### **SkyRunner:**

Recently, a microwave-based internet service became available for homes with a “line of sight” to its towers. It is a relatively new player called SkyRunner. A number of homeowners in Grandview Peaks have installed the service, which requires a small (pie plate-sized dish installed by the company) and the initial experience is positive. Owners are reporting speedy and reliable connections, and a wide range of pricing plans to meet their specific needs. Their website is [www.skyrunner.net](http://www.skyrunner.net) The residential plans are priced based on guaranteed speed and the amount of data desired, but also include unlimited plans. With SkyRunner, you can select the level of service that fits your needs and budget. The company will perform a site inspection to determine whether they can provide a signal at your home.

**Cellular:**

The major cell phone companies have expanded their availability and the number of plans offered for “4G wireless hotspots” – internet delivered over the existing cell phone system. Some users in Grandview Peaks report receiving higher speed internet than offered by Frontier at similar or lower cost. Additionally, the major cell phone providers are rolling out even higher-speed “5G” service, which may require new equipment and may cost more than 4G. These offerings are largely dependent on your home location and ability to receive a solid cell phone connection. Some cellular companies, due to the location of their towers, can provide better service to certain locations across Grandview Peaks than others; so you may have to experiment to find the right combination of signal, service, provider and cost.

**Starlink:**

As many might have seen, Elon Musk’s company has expanded its early customer engagement with the so-called “Starlink” low-orbit satellite internet service. A few Grandview Peaks residents, who registered their interest on the Starlink website ([www.starlink.com](http://www.starlink.com)), have received invitations to pre-order the service with a fully refundable \$99 deposit. There is no firm schedule on when service will be available, although the company indicated a mid to late in 2021. The hardware necessary for installation costs about \$500, and the high-speed service is estimated at \$99 per month. The service has received positive reviews in its beta test sites, largely in the Norther tier of states, and the company has been launching new satellites to expand coverage nationwide and, ultimately, worldwide. There are no actual users yet in North Carolina and the rollout schedule is not a guarantee.

**HughesNet:**

The final option is a “traditional” (high-altitude) satellite internet service, such as HughesNet. While this is a viable alternative for most homeowners, the reliability and cost of the service has presented a significant barrier.

So, while the future is likely to bring about some exciting and affordable higher-speed internet options, there are alternatives that are available and can be explored today. None is perfect. Not all will be available to every homeowner depending on location. And they may or may not deliver the speed, features and price that some may desire.

The Grandview Peaks board has no financial interest in any of these companies and does not endorse any particular solution or provider. However, the Board encourages residents to explore all these options to determine whether any is an improvement from the current level of service.

**If you would like additional information, please contact Julie Gonzalez, the Grandview Peaks property manager, who may be able to put you in touch with one of our more tech-savvy neighbors.**