There is a digital divide in Timiskaming; a gap between people who have access to (and who can use) internet connected devices and those who do not. This gap has become more visible in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as services and supports moved from being offered in-person to only being available on-line. There is a need for affordable, quality internet services in Timiskaming .[21]

This document provides a snapshot of the cost and speed (quality) of cellular and internet plans in the Timiskaming Health Unit area using information sourced[1] October 2021. As the pricing of cellular and internet plans often changes, connecting with service providers is required to fully understand the costs of a plan.

Overview of Internet Speed

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) sets target speeds for internet service providers in Canada.[4] These target speeds are represented by minimum download and upload speeds.

Download speeds determine how fast you are able to get content from the internet. For instance, if a family member sends you a video they want you to watch on YouTube, how fast the video loads will be partially determined by your download speed.

Upload speeds are how fast you are able to put your own data or content onto the internet. For example, if you want to hand in your online homework, how fast you are able to send that data will be partially determined by your upload speed.

The minimum internet speed target that has been set by the CRTC for internet service providers is a **50 Mbps download speed** and a **10 Mbps upload speed.**[4]

To measure what upload and download speeds your current internet services are running at, you can use this website: https://performance.cira.ca/

A glossary of technical terms is available in Appendix A.

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[1] The information included in this resource was sourced from company websites in October 2021, and additional follow-up calls were made to sales and customer service phone lines to ensure the accuracy of this information.
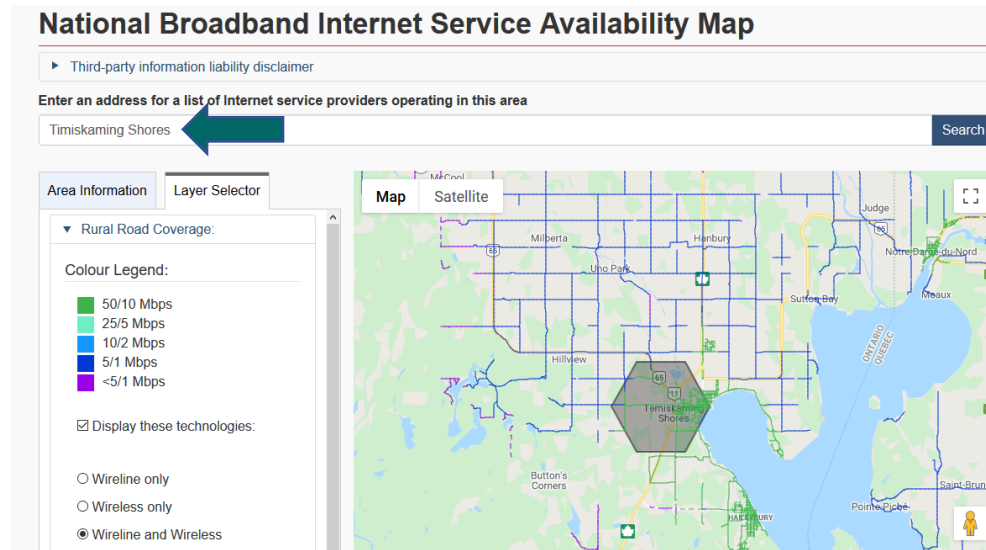
Internet Service Provider	Lower Cost Options Available?	Plan Details
Telus	Yes	**Mobility:** Mobility for Good ($25/month plus taxes for older adults who qualify). [20] For more information on the Mobility for Good (for older adults) program, please see: o https://www.telus.com/en/social-impact/connecting-canada/seniors/application
Rogers	Somewhat, internet options are of limited availability across Timiskaming.	**Mobility:** Prepaid Plans: [16] - Unlimited Can call / Text ($25/month) – no contract - Unlimited Can call/text + data (20Gb data for $60/month) **Internet:** [15] Connected for Success: https://about.rogers.com/our-impact/connected-for-success/ - Ignite Internet (up to 25 Mbps download speed) = $9.99 / month - Ignite Internet (up to 50 Mbps download speed) = $14.99 / month - Ignite Internet (up to 75 Mbps download speed) = $24.99 / month - Ignite Internet (up to 150 Mbps download speed) = $34.99 / month For applicant eligibility criteria, please see: https://about.rogers.com/our-impact/connected-for-success/ **Issue**: Rogers does not offer home internet services for the vast majority of the Timiskaming Health Unit catchment area; only offers mobile services.
Xplornet	No	**Satellite internet:** [24] 10 Mbps download speed/ 1 Mbps upload speed) 200GB data for $109.99/month - A minimum $99 install fee is required; additional costs may apply depending on installation requirements. - Monthly fee includes equipment rental cost (except for Wi-Fi router, which costs an extra $6.00 per month). - No specific plans for older adults or people experiencing low income. - Lowest cost option (5 Mbps) $69.99/month) Cancellation fees ($10 per month left in contract).
Ontera	No	**Internet:** [12] - Premium DSL (10.0 Mbps download speed) = $82.95/month - High Speed DSL (5.0 Mbps download speed) = $69.95/month - DSL Lite (512 Kbps download speed) = $44.95/month (*Note:* Upload speed information for these plans were not listed on Ontera's website). Require phoneline to get internet (phoneline is $31.53/month on top of other pricing). No special pricing options for older adults or for people experiencing low income. Cheapest rate /month for any internet (at slow speeds) is $76.48/month once account for phoneline cost.

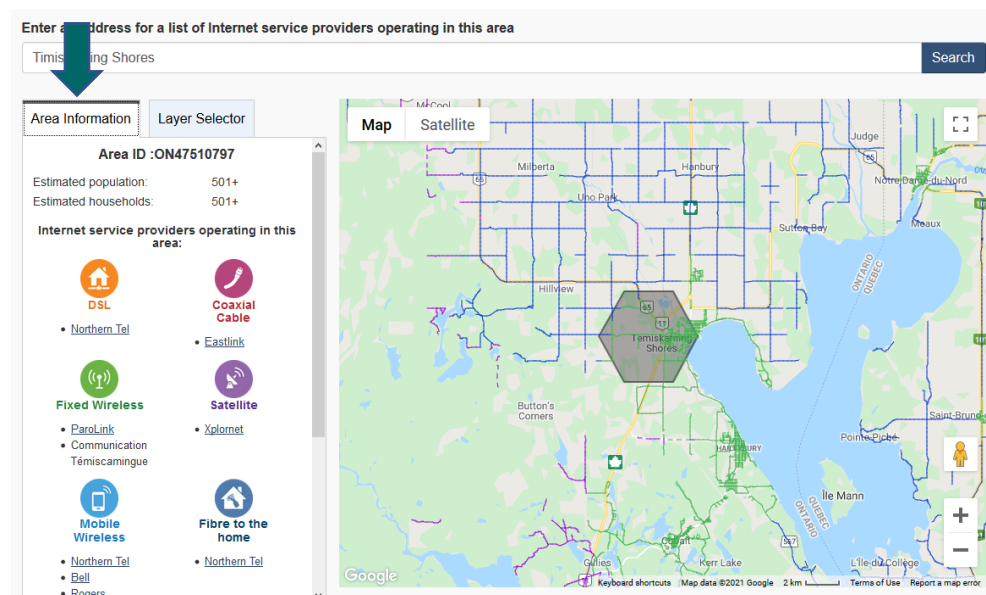| Internet Service Provider	Lower Cost Options Available?	Plan Details
Eastlink	Some lower cost phone plans available	**Mobile:** [7] - 250 MB data, unlimited incoming minutes, unlimited text messaging, 100 outgoing minutes = $15/month - 3 GB data, unlimited picture, video, and text messaging, unlimited minutes = $35/month - No specific pricing for older adults or people experiencing low income. **Internet:** [8] - (Using Kirkland Lake as example geography) - Internet 350 Fibre Link (350 Mbps Download, 10 Mbps upload) ($79.95/month for first 24 months, $99.95/month after promotion) - Internet 1 Gb Fibre Link (940 Mbps download, 10 Mbps upload) ($99.95/month for first 24 months, $119.95/month after promotion)
Northern Tel / Télébec	No	**Mobile:** (Wireless services offered by Bell Mobility) **Internet:** [11] (using Temiskaming Shores as example geography): - $90.95 / month (5 Mbps download speed, 512 Kbps upload speed). - $94.95 / month (8 Mbps download speed, 1 Mbps upload speed). - $97.95 / month (12 Mbps download speed, 1 Mbps upload speed). - No special pricing options for older adults or people experiencing low income.
Bell	Yes	**Mobile:** Prepaid Plans: [2] - 100 Canada-wide minutes + unlimited texting ($15/month) - Unlimited Canada-wide minutes + unlimited texting ($25/month) - Unlimited talk and text + 500 MB data ($30/month) - Unlimited talk and text + 2.5 GB data ($40/month) - Unlimited talk and text + 4.5 GB data ($45/month) - Unlimited talk and text + 8 GB data ($55/month) - No discounts for older adults or people experiencing low income. - Only options for discounts for specific groups are for individuals with accessibility needs: https://www.bell.ca/Accessibility_services/Mobile-Rate-Plan - $20 credited for each monthly payment – however client would need to register first with the company to meet this criterion. - One time charge $50 per client for connecting.
ParoLink	No	**Internet service plans:** [13] No special pricing available for older adults or people experiencing low income. Silver Plan (up to 6 Mbps download, up to 52 Kbps upload): $54.90 Gold Plan (up to 12 Mbps download, up to 1 Mbps upload): $79.90 Platinum Plan (up to 18 Mbps download, up to 1.5 Mbps upload): $124.95 One-time install fee of $125

If you are interested in viewing which internet service providers are active in your area, please visit

https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/sitt/bbmap/hm.html?lang=eng

and enter your address in the search bar at the top of the page.

After you have done this, you can select the "Area Information" tab on the left side of the page. This will show you which internet service providers operate in your area, and what services they can provide in your area.

This information has been summarized in the table below for the more common geographic areas for clients who took part in the Digital Divide project.

Area of District:	Location:	ISPs:
North	Kirkland Lake	Eastlink (coaxial cable, mobile, high-capacity transport services) Ontera (fixed wireless) Xplornet (satellite) Northern Tel (mobile) Bell (mobile wireless) Rogers (mobile) Telus (mobile) Télébec (mobile)
	Kearns	Northern Tel (DSL, mobile) Xplornet (satellite) Bell (mobile) Rogers (mobile) Telus (mobile) Télébec (mobile)
	Virginiatown	Northern Tel (DSL) Xplornet (satellite) Bell (mobile) Rogers (mobile) Telus (mobile) Télébec (mobile)
	Larder Lake	Xplornet (fixed wireless, satellite) Northern Tel (DSL, mobile, high-capacity transport services) Ontera (fixed wireless) Bell (mobile) Rogers (mobile) Télébec (mobile) Telus (mobile)
	Matachewan	Northern Tel (DSL, mobile) Xplornet (satellite) Bell (mobile) Telus (mobile) Télébec (mobile)
	Kenogami	Northern Tel (DSL, mobile) Ontera (fixed wireless) Xplornet (satellite) Bell (mobile) Telus (mobile) Rogers (mobile) Télébec (mobile)
Central	Charlton	Xplornet (fixed wireless, satellite) Northern Tel (DSL, mobile) Ontera (fixed wireless) Parolink (fixed wireless) Bell (mobile) Rogers (mobile) Telus (mobile) Télébec (mobile)

Area of District:	Location:	ISPs:
	Englehart	Xplornet (fixed wireless, satellite) Northern Tel (DSL, mobile) Parolink (fixed wireless) Bell (mobile) Rogers (mobile) Telus (mobile) Télébec (mobile) Ontera (high-capacity transport services)
	Earlton	Xplornet (fixed wireless, satellite) Northern Tel (DSL, mobile, high-capacity transport services) Parolink (fixed wireless) Bell (mobile) Rogers (mobile) Telus (mobile) Télébec (mobile)
South	Haileybury	Eastlink (coaxial cable, high-capacity transport services) Xplornet (fixed wireless, satellite) Ontera (fixed wireless) Parolink (fixed wireless) Northern Tel (mobile, fibre to home, high-capacity transport services) Bell (mobile) Rogers (mobile) Télébec (mobile)
	Temiskaming Shores	Northern Tel (DSL, fibre to home, mobile, high-capacity transport services) Eastlink (coaxial cable, high-capacity transport services) Parolink (fixed wireless) Xplornet (satellite) Bell (mobile) Rogers (mobile) Télébec (mobile) Telus (mobile) Ontera (high-capacity transport services)
	Cobalt	Eastlink (coaxial cable, high-capacity transport services) Ontera (fixed wireless) Parolink (fixed wireless) Xplornet (fixed wireless, satellite) Northern Tel (mobile, fibre to home, high-capacity transport services) Bell (mobile) Rogers (mobile) Telus (mobile) Télébec (mobile) Northern Tel (mobile, fibre to home, high-capacity transport services)
	Elk Lake	Northern Tel (DSL, mobile) Xplornet (satellite) Bell (mobile) Telus (mobile)

Area of District:	Location:	ISPs:
		Télébec (mobile)
	Latchford	Xplornet (fixed wireless, satellite) Ontera (fixed wireless) Northern Tel (mobile) Bell (mobile) Rogers (mobile) Télébec (mobile) Telus (mobile)
	Temagami	Xplornet (fixed wireless, satellite) Ontera (DSL) Northern Tel (mobile) Bell (mobile) Rogers (mobile) Télébec (mobile) Telus (mobile)
	Bear Island	Xplornet (fixed wireless) Ontera (DSL) Bell (mobile) Rogers (mobile) Telus (mobile)

Appendix A: Tech Jargon Definitions

Tech Jargon Definitions:	
Term:	**Definition:**
Internet Service Provider (ISP)	Internet service providers are the companies that sell their internet services to you. Some of Canada's largest internet service providers are Bell, Rogers, and Telus. [17]
Digital Subscriber Line (DSL)	Digital subscriber lines are communication lines that allow for internet connection over telephone lines. DSL options are often slower than more recently developed internet connection options, and also require the subscriber to have access to a phone line. [9]
Coaxial Cable	Coaxial cable (also known as "cable" internet) is a type of cable that carries data over long distances. This type of cable is commonly used for both cable TV and internet connectivity. Coaxial cables are generally faster than DSL options, but slower than Fiber options. [5, 18]
Fiber-optic Network	Fiber-optic networks are internet networks that are either fully or partially made of fiber optic cables. Fiber-optic cables are able to transmit digital information in the form of light, which allows the information to travel much faster when compared with other internet connectivity options. [23] Fiber to the home is generally quite expensive, and only available in certain regions of Ontario.
Satellite Internet	Satellite internet services involve connecting your home to internet services through a satellite dish. This dish is mounted on your property, and it communicates with a satellite in space, which in turn communicates with your service provider's internet hub back on Earth. [14] These services are often quite expensive; however, they are often one of the only available options in more remote locations.
4G and 5G networks	4G and 5G networks are types of cellular networks. The "G" in these networks stands for generation, meaning that these are fourth and fifth generation networks. These networks allow people with smartphones to access the internet across wide areas. 5G networks are different from 4G networks in that they can support many more people using the network at the same time and maintain high speed services while doing so. [22]
Gigabyte (GB), Megabyte (MB), Kilobyte (KB)	Gigabytes, Megabytes, and Kilobytes are all units of measurement for the size of information for a digital device: A Kilobyte is about 1000 bytes. A Megabit is 1,000,000 bits A Megabyte is about 1000 Kilobytes A Gigabyte is about 1000 Megabytes These are important to understand for smartphone plans, as sometimes service providers will have set monthly limits for the data you can use with your device (and these limits are usually measured in Gigabytes).
Mbps (Megabits per second)	Megabits per second is one type of measurement of how fast your internet services are. It tells you how many of this unit of measurement (Megabits) you can either download from the internet per second, or upload to the internet per second. [6, 19]

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