



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 10, 2022

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CHITTENDEN COUNTY COMMUNITIES VOTE TO FORM VERMONT'S TENTH COMMUNICATIONS UNION DISTRICT

Montpelier, Vermont – Residents in five Chittenden County municipalities voted Tuesday to form a Communications Union District (CUD) to pool demand, resources, and speed up the build-out of universal broadband. 89% of voters cast a ballot in favor of forming the Chittenden County CUD.

"I am thrilled by the overwhelming response from South Burlington voters in support of forming and joining a regional Communications Union District in what promises to be a huge step forward towards improving the affordability, quality, and access to high-speed broadband connectivity and service in our region," said Andrew Bolduc, South Burlington Deputy City Manager.

Voters in Essex, Essex Junction, Shelburne, South Burlington, and Williston approved the CUD, a municipal organization of two or more towns for the purpose of building communication infrastructure together. Forming a CUD creates a single point of contact to negotiate with providers and leverage grants, making it more likely for municipalities to attract a provider and leverage financial resources.

“We are grateful for the overwhelming support of our voters. While there are no guarantees of success, forming a Communications Union District is clearly our best chance to help facilitate expanded broadband connectivity throughout our region,” said Shelburne Town Manager Lee Krohn.

According to the Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB), creating a CUD allows towns to aggregate their addresses and their voice. By working together to expand broadband, member towns can attract new partners, negotiate effective deals for better service, and provide ongoing oversight to broadband providers building with the support of the CUD. It also decreases financial risk to individual towns, while ensuring no address will be left unserved and provides additional access to federal and state grant programs.

“Congratulations to the residents of Shelburne, Williston, Essex, Essex Junction, and South Burlington for voting overwhelmingly in favor of creating a public entity to finish the job of delivering world-class broadband to every consumer in the county,” said F.X. Flinn, Chair of the Vermont Communications Union District Association (VCUDA). “Creating the Chittenden County Communications District is a critical step in securing digital equity and access in Chittenden and for all Vermonters.”

Each member municipality is now looking for residents interested in volunteering to be appointed as a representative or an alternate to serve on the CUD board. That board will work with the VCBB to develop a feasibility plan for building the network and raise funds to construct and manage it.

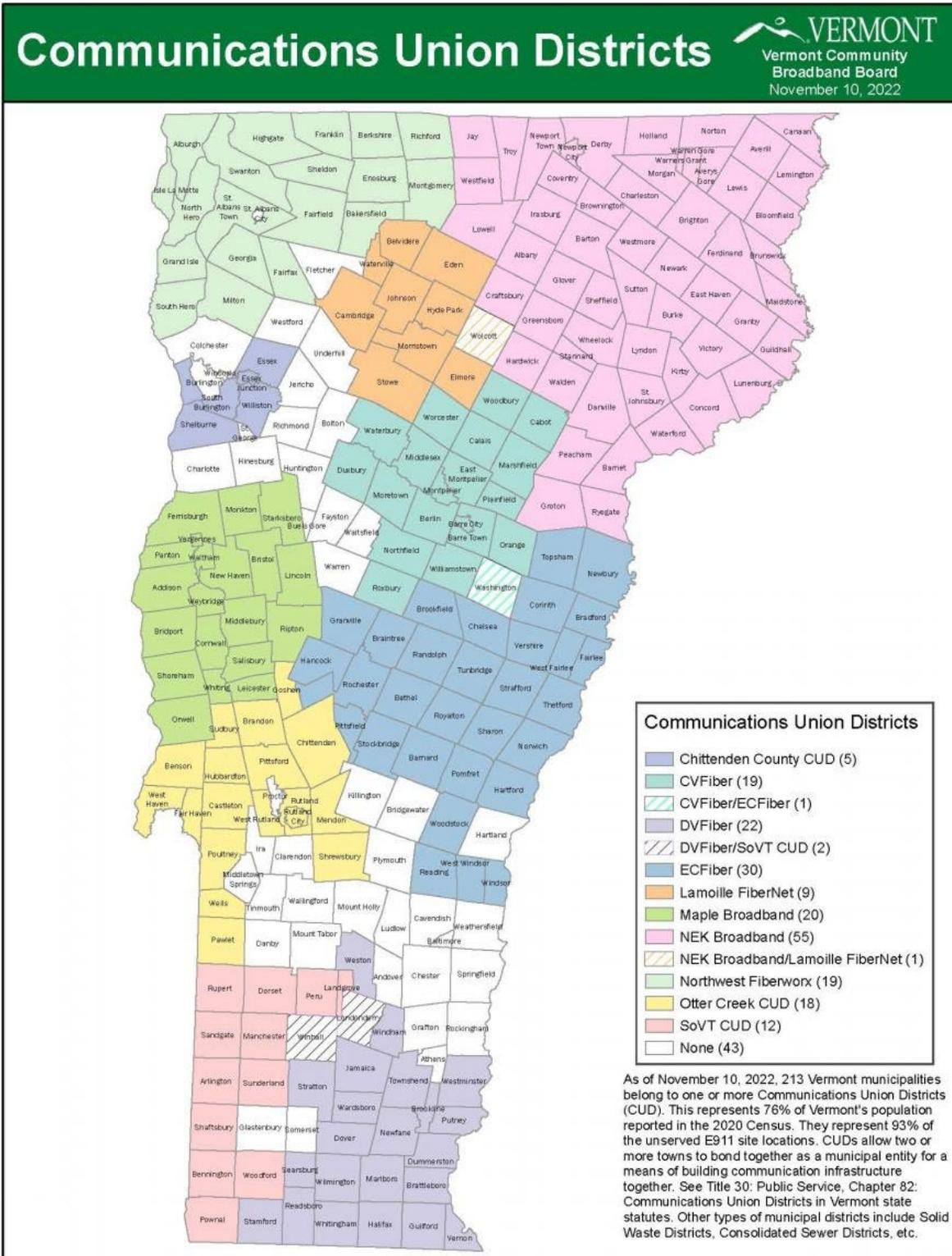
This vote means 213 of Vermont’s 252 towns are members of a Communications Union District. This includes more than 93% of the locations in the state without broadband of at least 25/3 Mbps. More than 76% of Vermonters are now represented by community-grounded organizations with the goal of ensuring residents have broadband service capable of nearly unlimited speeds.

“Broadband is an essential service and should be equitably available to all Vermonters. Through partnerships or building themselves, these CUDs are essential to providing oversight and holding providers accountable to the needs of the member towns. We look forward to additional towns joining the Chittenden County CUD and are committed to the success of the effort,” said Rob Fish, Deputy Director of the VCBB.

The new CUD has 367 addresses that do not have access to internet speeds of at least 25/3 Mbps. 18,415 addresses do not have access to symmetrical speeds of 100/100 Mbps. Every CUD is working to achieve universal access to 100/100 Mbps while serving the underserved addresses first.

For more information on Communications Union Districts (CUDS) and a map, please visit <https://publicservice.vermont.gov/content/vermont-communications-union-districts>.

Map of Current Communications Union Districts



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