



SILVERLAKES

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, INC.

Jan 12, 2023

BLUE STREAM FIBER – FACTS & FICTION

Dear SilverLakes Residents,

Hello neighbors and Happy New Year. As we kick off 2023, we find ourselves halfway through our planned 2-year fiber optic build out with Blue Stream. We thought this would be a good time to catch everyone up on how we are doing and address a lot of misinformation that is floating around the social media universe. Forgive the length of this letter, but there is a lot of information to cover. Please note that much of the information below comes directly from our meeting minutes that are posted online.

As with most big contracts, the SilverLakes Master Board puts together a committee of both board members and residents with relevant experience to research and interview potential vendors. **It is the committee's ultimate task to make a recommendation to the board based on their findings.**

In early 2021, the board appointed a "cable committee" consisting of both board members and residents. Many of those committee members were part of the previous Comcast negotiations some years back. In May 2021, SilverLakes engaged the services of the same cable consultant that had assisted us previously with the existing Comcast contract to assist and guide the committee in drafting a Request for Proposal (RFP) and reviewing proposals. The consultant and committee members did all the leg work and were very involved in the details. This is a very effective method that includes residents in the decision-making process, but at the same time controls the number of contacts reaching out to any potential vendor. Our committee members spent many hours determining what we needed, reviewing proposals, visiting each vendor's references, and comparing contracts. The committee worked closely with our consultant to review all potential providers and assess viability of services.

By July 2021 the committee had begun renewal negotiations with Comcast and were also seeking other vendors. At that time a key decision was made to go with "Fiber to the home" (instead of the existing coax technology) going forward. *Fiber provides a more direct and efficient connection than the shared coax signal.* By switching to a Fiber Optic connection, we will have an overall faster internet connection, as well as symmetric speeds. *The world is moving toward streaming for everything and getting the fastest, most consistent internet connection for our residents was a major factor for the next contract.* Getting a fiber connection built out to over 5,000 homes would take time, and since our current contract with Comcast expires on 12/28/2023, it was imperative to finalize the new contract by the end of 2021, to give the selected vendor enough time for the build out.

At the Sept. 2021 meeting, our cable consultant provided a recap of negotiations with several providers after RFP's. A final RFP was prepared and disseminated to all available providers; 5 Total providers submitted responses to the Association's RFP. The Committee narrowed down the providers to 2 viable candidates, including Comcast. Contract drafts were requested with the following deadlines.

- First draft by Sept. 30
- Redlines with final version complete by Oct 15
- Committee's Final Recommendation for Board approval to take place on Oct. 18, 2021

At the Oct 2021 meeting, our attorney, provided a recap concerning the Cable Committee contract negotiations and fiber build out. Contracts had been requested from the two finalists, but Comcast did not provide an adequate contract. The contract Comcast returned missed 95% of our provisions from the agreement. Therefore, the Association drafted a contract and sent it to Comcast. *Every reasonable attempt was made to give Comcast a chance at renewing our agreement.* In the end though, there were three key provisions Comcast could not/would not meet.

1. Symmetrical speeds for internet download/upload. Upload speeds are crucial because that is the part of your internet connection that sends data from your device out to the world (think video chats, live streaming on social media). With Blue Stream we will have the same speed up and down!
2. Blue Stream Fiber offered a mesh Wi-Fi plume system to guarantee you could stream 4k anywhere in your home. Comcast would not commit to that.
3. Blue Stream Fiber offered a representative on site for 40 hours a week to support SilverLakes residents. Comcast had every opportunity to meet those same offers, but they would not commit in writing.

Based on the available options, the committee's recommendation to the Master Board was that Blue Stream's offer was the best solution moving forward. The master board accepted the committee's recommendation. Contract awarded to Blue Stream.

Blue Stream was now tasked with running fiber cable around the entire community, through each subdivision and up to the outer wall of each home. This is a huge and complicated project. Have you ever tried to dig in your yard? Our homes are built on coral rock. It is very hard to dig here. Unfortunately, as the machines do their jobs, there has been some damage. This was expected and would have happened no matter which vendor had been selected to install fiber. **Blue Stream has committed to SilverLakes to restore each and every property to the homeowner's satisfaction.** If there is any damage or landscaping issue has not been resolved, or is scheduled to be resolved, contact Blue Stream. And if they don't give you a satisfactory answer, send an email to me at president.silverlakes@gmail.com.

Finally, there is a lot of misinformation out there, along with blatant lies that are being repeated online. I would like to put as many of those as possible to rest.

- There are no secrets, there is no money changing hands, and no palms are getting greased. Contract negotiations are always done in private. You can't show the general public what each vendor is offering during negotiations. If you were bidding on a job, would you want your bid to be made public so your competitor could see it? Not only does that harm the vendor that is bidding on the job, but it would harm SilverLakes as we would lose negotiating power. Although we can't share all the specific details, the cable contract has been discussed at length at each meeting since 2021! The minutes are all posted online.

- Comcast could not definitively provide a date for fiber optic service (Blue Stream agreed to a date and penalties if missed)
- We will not be paying more! Every single home in SilverLakes will have fiber optic services to their home for the same price as we pay now. The first contractual increase will be two years after service begins and will be gradual. Door fees paid by Blue Stream will help defray future cost increases.
- Blue Stream includes 3 Tivo boxes, with 100 hours of DVR recording. You can rent additional boxes if you prefer, but you don't even need a Tivo box if you have a smart TV or attach a fire stick.
- Internet will be just as fast as we have now, if not faster and we will have **symmetrical** upload speeds! 600 Mbps download and 600 Mbps upload speeds (will match Comcast Extreme).
- High-Definition TV **IS** included. 200 Channels of SD & HD and 50 Music Channels of Video Content.
- There is no opt out. The need for a SilverLakes-wide Fiber Optic Build Out precludes any opt out options. In fact, **NONE of the vendors that bid on the project offered an opt out option**. It's simply not cost effective based on the initial investment required.
- Blue Stream guarantees 4K streaming around your entire home. They will do this with their included modem and up to 3 Wireless Mesh Access Points (Mesh WiFi Pods)
- No existing Comcast or AT&T lines will be cut. No one can remove another vendor's equipment.
- Repairs include a guaranteed Service Level Agreement: Same Day 4-hour response to any service call request received by 2pm. After 2pm, call will be scheduled for first thing the following day. And if not fixed right the first time, residents get a \$20 credit and preferred scheduling. Comcast did not agree to any financial penalties if service levels were not met.
- Your BOD is very involved in this project. Two board members meet with key Blue Stream & PPM personnel at least once a week to review the project status and any ongoing issues.

I hope I have addressed most, if not all, of your concerns in the points above. However, should you still have any concerns or questions, we have scheduled an online meeting with the board and our Blue Stream representatives.

Blue Stream Town Hall (via zoom) -- January 19th at 7pm.

Join the Zoom meeting at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9544386570>

We can answer general questions at the meeting, but if you have a specific issue regarding your property, the best course of action is to reach out to Omar from Blue Stream. His number is 844-644-3030 and his email is silverlakes@bluestreamfiber.com.

Sincerely,

Laura Santiago, President

On behalf of your SilverLakes Board of Directors