

2023 Community Video/Internet Upgrade Proposals

Questions & Answers

as of 17 Aug 2021

Q Why is Venture Three looking into changing our TV/Internet carrier?

A The current contract with Comcast will expire February 1, 2023, and this is an opportune time to look at improved technology. The decades-old infrastructure Comcast put into this community (buried coaxial cables) is aging, and failing in some areas due to water and salt corrosion. Two vendors we are investigating, Hotwire and Blue Stream, use fiber optics and will replace the entire infrastructure with no capital expenditures to Venture Three. Comcast has no plans to upgrade the current infrastructure. Both Hotwire and Blue Stream provides service to only bulk customers, like HOA and Condo associations.

Q Does this change need to be approved by the owners? Does this contract go out to the community for a vote?

A Yes. Although this is a contract for services (like plumbing, trash collection and tree trimming), which is the responsibility of the V3 Board of Directors, an infrastructure change will be required for the fiberoptic cable. Additional information will be provided in the future.

Q But, what if I don't want to be involved in the changes?

A All owners are governed equally by the Venture Three rules and decisions. By law, the board cannot make exceptions for individual owners. However, any owner is free to contact any service provider for individual retail service. Keep in mind that you will pay both the increased Condo fee, as well as whatever charge the retail service will cost you.

Q Will I be paying more for TV/Internet service?

A That depends on which vendor and services we contract with and what additional services you currently pay out-of-pocket to Comcast. If one of the fiber optic vendors is chosen, the money you pay through your association dues will indeed go up. However, that is because all owners would receive free internet service in addition to the basic channels they currently receive through their association dues. 60% of the owners currently buy retail internet service through Comcast and we estimate another 20% buy internet through other providers. By paying for internet services in bulk through the association, the cost savings will be significant to the majority of Venture 3 owners.

Q Are local channels included?

A Yes. All local channels are available.

Q What if my channels aren't listed in the channel guide? What about extra packages, like Sports or Entertainment?

A Similar to Comcast, the channel lineups do not include the premium channels. We have put channel guides from all three vendors on the Venture Three website so you can compare what is offered. If you want to go to a higher tier service, you will pay for premium channels, as you do today. Hotwire has offered us complementary 2 years of 12 Showtime channels.

Q Is a Community Channel offered?

A Yes, a Community Channel, showing local Venture Three information, will be made available.

Q What are the pricing levels for the special channel tiers?

A Please look on the Venture Three website for specific channel tier content and pricing details.

Q Do they have On-Demand TV content?

A Yes, they both do. Hotwire uses the same On-Demand library as Comcast.

Q What about Peacock?

A Comcast owns Peacock, which is why it's free to us now (a \$4.99/mo value). With Hotwire or Blue Stream you will have to subscribe to Peacock and pay its monthly fee.

Q Can I "suspend" my account when I leave for an extended period? Or, will I have to pay the full fee for the year?

A Today, you are not suspending your entire cable service; you are only suspending the portion that you pay directly to Comcast. You still pay for the basic TV portion that is provided through the association fees. However, you will be able to suspend service for any additional upgrades you pay for out-of-pocket, such as premium channels. Generally speaking, most households will save money with the new packages, even without suspending. An example of the savings is shown on the Venture Three website.

Q What does it cost to suspend service during off season for additional services?

A Hotwire charges \$6/month and Blue Stream charges \$5/month for suspending services. As is today, your basic TV service (and internet service if one of the fiber optic vendors is chosen) will continue to be available while your premium services are suspended.

Q Will I be able to access my Florida DVR content while I am up north?

A Blue Stream says you can use FireStick to do so. Hotwire offers the Fision-Go app for this functionality.

Q What additional equipment will I have to rent or buy?

A Three set top boxes will be provided by Hotwire or Blue Stream (Comcast only provides one). If you have more than three TVs, you will need to rent those from the provider. A wifi modem with two extenders is provided for the internet. These should be sufficient for the average size home in Venture 3. If you have an unusual situation, you may need to rent an additional wifi extender.

Q How much DVR storage is offered?

A Blue Stream, which uses TIVO, offers 100 hours of DVR storage in the cloud, with an additional 500 hours available for \$12.95/mo. Hotwire offers 200 hours of DVR cloud storage.

Q How long will it take to install everyone's system?

A Installation will take approximately 6 months after contract signing. Once your own residence is installed, you are able to use the new system, or continue using Comcast until its expiration date (2/1/2023).

Q What about RV sites?

A The plan is to install a post on-site with connectivity to the fiber. A modem and wifi hub will broadcast wireless video and internet into the RV. The set-top boxes (STB) will need to be kept indoors.

Q Is there any downtime while the fiber optic infrastructure is being installed? Will I be without service until the switch is made?

A No, you will not be without service. The vendor will be chosen and the contract signed with plenty of time for the infrastructure to be installed prior to the expiration of the Comcast contract. The timeline will also take into account the amount of time needed to convert each owner's home to the new service and to provide in-person training on using their system.

Q Will you bring the cable into my house where my current cable comes in?

A The installer will analyze each home to determine the best method, and work with the owner to find the best place to enter the home.

Q Will they dig up my yard pavers or concrete to install the new system?

A The installer will do their best to not disturb the area. However, if it is necessary to dig anything up, it will be replaced back to its original state. This includes pavers.

Q What if I have a WIFI router in my house that I want to continue using?

A You are free to use your own equipment, and can discuss it with your installer.

Q How will I learn how to use the new system?

A Once a new vendor is chosen, we will request they provide a demonstration on how we get programming using their remote. More importantly, at time of installation, they will come (by appointment) to each residence to set up the equipment and teach the owner how it works. If an owner feels it is necessary, the installer will come back, at no charge, for additional training.

Q Are there voice activation abilities?

A Yes, both Hotwire and Blue Stream have voice activated remotes.

Q What is the Internet data cap rate? (Comcast's is 1 terabyte.) What happens if I exceed the cap rate?

A Neither Hotwire nor Blue Stream has a data cap.

Q Will the fiber optic lines be protected in conduit? What happens if the line is broken?

A Yes, the lines are in a protective conduit. Breakage can occur, of course, and if that happens, the lines will be spliced back together.

Q What level of Customer Service will be offered?

A Both Hotwire and Blue Stream will have a dedicated customer service line for Venture Three owners. Both offer a 365 day, 24/7 service call center, all located in Florida. They both guarantee a call is answered within 1 minute. Blue Stream offers a 4 hour service arrival guarantee, and Hotwire guarantees <24 hour arrival. Hotwire states that 87% of their service calls are solved on the phone. They both monitor equipment performance from their end and might often resolve the problem before the owner is aware of an issue.

Q What if I need technical service in my home?

A Both Hotwire and Blue Stream will come to your house, at no charge, the same day or next day. Comcast charges \$100 for the visit if the problem is inside your home.

Q How do I get defective set-top boxes or modems replaced?

A With Comcast, you either go to their store to exchange parts, or you mail them the defective unit and wait until they mail you back a new unit. With Hotwire and Blue Stream, they will bring the new unit to your home the same day or the next day.

Q How long will this new fiber infrastructure last?

A It is estimated to last 50 years or more.

Q Will we have “pedestals” sticking out of the ground like we do with Comcast? If not, how will the existing pedestals be removed?

A The pedestals are not required for any of the fiber providers. The Association will determine how best to have the Comcast pedestals removed.

Q Are there any “free incentives” I will receive?

A Hotwire: 2 years of free Showtime channels (12 channels), plus access to SHO Anytime. Free land line (phone service) for the first 12 months, with reduced rates thereafter.

Q If I use the free land line offered, will I be able to keep my current phone number?

A Yes, your phone number will be ported over to the new service.

Q I have Xfinity/Comcast Mobile (cell phone) service, which is offered to only Xfinity/Comcast Internet customers. If we switch Internet providers, will I lose my cell phone service? Do Hotwire or Blue Stream offer mobile (cell phone) service?

A Yes, you will lose your Comcast cell phone service once you no longer have their internet service. Blue Stream does not offer cell phone service. Hotwire is researching this topic currently and hope to be able to offer the service in the future.

Q Will we lose TV and internet during power outages/hurricanes as we sometimes do now?

A Fiber optics only requires electricity at the source (the vendor) and the destination (your house). If you have electricity (generator) then you should be able to have internet and TV.

Q Where do I find out the most current information about this project?

A The Venture Three website is the best place to find the latest information. Sign in at www.venture3.org and go to Community Info/New V3 TV/Internet Proposals.

Questions from 27 July Board Meeting

Q. It seems Comcast is not interested in upgrading their infrastructure - in 2021 Fiberoptics is becoming the standard in large cities, and Hotwire and Bluestream being willing to invest in our area is a great sign for longterm partnership.

A. Comcast has a hybrid concept. They have fiber optic which they bring into the Park to a hub, but it does not go to the individual houses. They have no plans to change their delivery system.

Q. 300MB is awesome - I work from home on video calls all day, with 2 internet tv's. I have 25MB today here in V3 and in high season and peak hours it's not enough and I get interruptions regularly

A. Hotwire and Blues Sream each will provide 300 Mbps download and 300 Mbps upload, Comcast has offered 100 Mbps download and 5 mbps upload. The upload speed is significant for video calls.

Q. It seems Hotwire and Blue Stream could be very difficult to learn those technically disabled. Especially since they need to do a tutorial.

I have a meeting with Hotwire and Blue Stream next week and I will ask them to demonstrate how we get programming using their remote. I think I have made it sound more confusing than it really is.

Q. So do these offer regular local channels?

A. Yes. All local channels are available.

Q. Can anything be voice activated?

A. Both Hotwire and Blue Stream have voice activated remotes.

Q. Does this contract go out to the community for a vote?

A. No. This is a contract for services which is the responsibility of the V3 Board of Directors. We will be reaching out to the Community for their ideas, opinions and comments. I will be announcing 2 Town Hall Meetings where I will have the representatives of Hotwire and Blue Stream making presentations and answering questions.

Q. Do they include all sports and entertainment package or is that separate like Comcast?

A. Similar to Comcast, the channel line ups do not include the premium channels. We have put their channel guide on the website so you can compare what is offered. If you want to go to a higher tier service and get premium channels you would pay for them yourself. Hotwire has offered us 2 years of 12 Showtime channels.

COMMENT: It seems like they're only really providing internet and we must stream thru a another se sorry tried to exit and entered instead you've answered my question

The services provided are both video and Internet. Blue Stream and Hotwire both offer over 140 channels. You can go directly to live TV without entering any 3rd party streaming app.

Q. It seems like we will be paying more through HOA and then have to add all our favorites.

A. The Condo fee will certainly increase, but whether you would not have your personal favorites offered will have to be determined by each individual when they compare what is offered in their program guide. I encourage you to look at the program guides which are available on our Web site. Keep in mind that you may already be paying Comcast for premium tiers (anything above Digital Starter) to get your favorites that are not currently included in the current bulk contract.

Q. Comcast has a data cap of just over a terabyte for internet. What are the data caps for Blue Stream and Hotwire if any?

A. I will have to ask about data caps, but you can get up to 1000 Mbps
Based on presentations provided, by both Blue Stream and Hotwire, there are no data caps

Q. I have no problem with Comcast but the others mean you need to add in more money individually for favorites.

A. Again, please review the channel guides to see if your favorites are included. Keep in mind that you may already be paying Comcast for premium tiers (anything above Digital Starter) to get your favorites that are not currently included in the current bulk contract.

Q. If we stayed with Comcast though the DVR service would not be the X1 cloud based service but it would be the old service with all of their nearly obsolete machines that are the hard drive machines if I understand right?

A. Yes. They did not offer to replace equipment. You are referring to a Comcast proposal which would add just DVR service with no internet. The DVR box here would be to old hard drive based STB and not the cloud based X1 system which requires internet.

Q. How many of our sites have full time residents?

A. Trying to determine the number of full-time residents is not as easy as it may seem. Today our owners are using their homes in many different ways. There are about 110 residents who consider themselves full time, this being their primary residence, but we have about 90 owners who live in the area and use their properties on the weekends and for their personal vacation time. The remainder of the time they rent their property out. We have owners who have bought their property exclusively for rental and they rent year-round. During the winter season we usually have 130 rentals for the entire season. Then we have a number of owners who stay here for up to 6 months, go to their Northern home and do not rent their property. This summer our rental properties have exploded and we have seen a steady increase in renters throughout the summer.

Q. Will the lines be in conduit? Will they be cutting our streets. How many central boxes will there be. But these modem/routers need power so locations are limited

A. The lines are in conduit. We do not anticipate any roads being cut. There will be 2 central hubs. The modems do need electrical power. OUTSIDE of the home, in the park, only 2 central distribution sites are required. All of the current green Comcast type distribution boxes you see every few homes would not be required as the fiber is run directly to the house. INSIDE of the home, the fiber is run directly to an Optical Network Terminator (ONT) which is in turn connected to a modem/router by a short cat 6 cable. This will require power. Its location would be determined during your individual home survey. The only other device will be one or more WI-FI extenders plugged into an outlet. The number is determined during your home survey and may vary depending on the construction of you home. Concrete floors, metal studs, etc all affect WI-FI.

Q. I watched prime video and also Netflix at the same time all last winter with no problem and I only have performance starter cost me \$35 per month I own my modem/router and don

A. Performance starter from Comcast is what their proposal would be if they bundle Video and Internet and is 100mb. Some people currently rent their modem from Comcast (\$14) and others have chosen to buy their own. If you have Performance, you may be receiving a promotional price, the current retail cost for 100mb Comcast performance level internet is \$76.

Q. Will or can the fiber companies wire our beach, entry, gates / storage area also so we can use our new keys and have video cameras at those areas?

A. Our current plans do not include any of the areas you described.

Q. All of Comcast's equipment is many years old and have they offered to come and replace any of the old equipment re cables and such?

A. Not at this time. If there is a problem with performance they do come in and replace old wiring, but it is on an as needed basis.

COMMENT: White glove Service -That is a huge plus for service aid!

If Comcast has to mail you any equipment, they will also charge you a mailing fee and it takes a while to actually get the equipment in

Q. Why can't you lay it all out to the owners and have a vote on it

A. As I explained earlier, one of the responsibilities of the Board is to act on behalf of the owners. We will be continuing to ask for input from our owners. We are setting up the website so every owner can go in and view everything we are doing regarding this service we provide. If owners need questions answered or have a strong opinion as to whether they agree with putting video and Internet together they need to contact their Board members so their voice can be heard. Each owner needs to understand that these decisions are made for the entire Community and not each individual's specific circumstances. Our job right now is to communicate so all of us can have as much information as possible.

COMMENT: I currently pay \$53/month for internet with AT&T & an additional \$10.00/month for my DVR w/Comcast, so I look at it as I would be paying \$40/more for my monthly fees, but I would be getting rid of \$63.00/month so in essence, in my situation, I would be saving money.

COMMENT: I have 50 mbps, but actually clocks in at 63. Anybody having problems streaming movies on Comcast's lowest internet (which is now 50mps) should check their speed via speedtest.net. You may need to reset your modem.

COMMENT: Richard your numbers I believe are skewed in my case I pay \$140 extra a year under these proposals it will cost me about \$300 more after I deduct my \$140 from the total

Q. Would it be possible to invite the two new companies to make a presentation to the majority of owners in January to answer questions before a decision is made?

A. I have both Companies giving me a date and time to do a Town Hall meeting later this month. It will be a Zoom meeting so everyone can see it. If later we need to have additional meeting's we will do that. Because we have a current contract that expires February 1, 2023 and if we change companies the new company needs up to 10 months to do the necessary installation work, we have an issue with time. No matter who we go with for a new contract there is also up to 90 days to get a contract approved. As you can see, it seems like a long time off, but we will run out of time quickly.

Q. The only advantage Comcast has is voice activation. What about Peacock on Blue stream and Hotwire? Thanks.

A. Both companies have voice activated remotes. I will ask about Peacock. Peacock is an NBC streaming APP and is available on any streaming device. It has 3 tiers, Free, Premium and Premium Plus. It should be noted that COMCAST/XFINITY owns NBC. Xfinity recently included Peacock Premium at no cost (normally \$4.99/month). However, according to Xfinity it is **only** available to **Xfinity Flex or X1 customers**. Peacock would be available as a normal download APP on both Blue Stream and Hotwire.

Q. I checked Hotwire site. They do not provide channel options.

A. I'm not sure what your definition of channel options is. If you mean the ability to pick individual channels you would like to receive, I don't believe anyone offers that option. They do have more channels than they will provide us as the basic service and then you can purchase additional tiers of service. It is the same as we currently have with Comcast.

The Hotwire channel listings, that is included in the contract, is available on the [V3 web site](#)

Q. If we switch to another carrier, will there be any downtime or will we have Comcast the whole time the transition is taking place?

A. The goal is to have no interruption of service. That is why the timing of making a decision is critical. Blue Stream has indicated they would allow people to use the Internet as soon as it is installed in your house. There would be no charge until the entire system was turned on. If we did not continue with Comcast, I don't believe they would extend our service beyond February 1 2023.

Q. Holiday Out also went out to a vote to the owners.

A. In talking with Holiday Out management, they went out with a one question survey to their residents, asking if they would be interesting in bundling video and Internet. They had about 170 responses out of the 535 residents. I was told it was split 60% in favor and 30% not.