

ConnectParkview

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Parkview Residents' Guide to choosing the right fast broadband Internet service for you

Connect Parkview Newsletter No.1
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The beginning of the Parkview Fibre Network
Dark Fibre Africa team connecting Croft and Co,
17 November, 2014



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The ConnectParkview Guide to Choosing the right Broadband Internet Service for you!

The Parkview Residents' Association has been receiving a lot of queries about the ConnectParkview Fibre to the Home (FTTH) project. This guide aims to give you as straightforward and objective account of your options as we can muster.

So how should you choose?

To help you we have put together some basic information comparing the various options you have. We based this on what we have learnt about residents' needs from the survey we conducted in August. DFA was selected as the partner to roll out a fibre network on the basis of being willing to provide an open access network - that means that a range of Internet service providers ('ISPs') can compete on the same network. So you will have a lot of choice! And based on the past few years and international trends, it is likely that prices will fall in the future.

We continue to support the roll out of open access FTTH in the suburb for three reasons:

In the long term, Fibre to the Home is the best way to bring fast broadband Internet to everyone in the suburb at the best prices.

The FTTH network is Open Access. Open access means that any ISP can access the network. That means competition - which means better prices and better service.

DFA's willingness to enter into a binding agreement with us on long term costs and services, which we are aiming to conclude before the end of November.

In choosing between the ISPs on Fibre and also Telkom's service which is not an FTTH service, but is provided on phone lines and via a new wireless technology, our advice is to **take your time**. Ask around our community. Go to our Facebook page (search in Facebook for Parkview,Johannesburg) where you can ask a question or make a comment. Or follow @ConnectParkview on twitter. Or write to connect@parkview.org.za and the Parkview Connect



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team of volunteers (which include some real tech geeks!) will try to answer your questions as quickly as they can.

If you are interested in seeing what very fast broadband is like, you can experience Vodacom's service over the DFA fibre network at Croft and Co via wifi and you can try out Telkom's LTE service at Scusi or across the road at their sales booth - both are free for a limited period. Whichever service you choose, the PRA is delighted that thanks to the process that we initiated and DFA's commitment to invest considerable amounts in building a fibre network, you now will have a choice of services delivering very fast broadband which will benefit you and the suburb for years to come.

This e-newsletter contains:

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A list of Frequently Asked Questions	page 6
A glossary of terms you may find in promotional literature	page 11

Once you have looked at this guide, you may want to contact one of the ISPs offering services on the FTTH network in Parkview. You will find there contact information on the parkview.org.za website to on our Facebook page.

For further information or to get in touch:

Facebook: Parkview, Johannesburg

Twitter: @ConnectParkview

Email: connect@parkview.org.za



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A Guide to Choosing the right service for you

Based on the survey we conducted in August, we've profiled some of the needs that seem typical of residents in our suburb and suggested what you might find the most suitable. If you are not sure of any of the terms or acronyms used here please check the glossary on page 11. If you have further questions, please check the Frequently Asked Questions list on page 6 or contact us at connect@parkview.org.za.

'I am pretty happy with ADSL and my ISP when my ADSL line works. I don't want to spend much more than I am currently paying. I just want a more reliable service and a better response when something goes wrong with the line.'

If this is you, then look at some of the very well priced FTTH offerings from as low as R499 per month - close to or even less than what you may be paying now for ADSL but for a faster and better quality service. You may want to look at what the ISPs offer in terms of customer support if something goes wrong.

You may also want to look at the option of dropping your phone line altogether, saving over R160 per month, and adding voice service to a package - its called Voice over IP or 'VoIP'. A number of ISPs will do this and this could save you over R100 on phone line costs and over 30% on your call costs. You get a telephone and a phone number. It's even possible to transfer your existing Telkom number. Ask one of the ISPs offering this service for more information and prices.

Once you move from ADSL to the Fibre network you may find that you start using more data than you were. Make sure your ISP will warn you in advance when you are close to reaching your cap and check the cost of 'out of bundle' data. You may also want to look for an ISP that will let you change packages if you find you need to.

'I have a need for the fastest speeds available'

If you know you need 100Mbps, you have a choice between a number of the FTTH ISPs which will be offering 100Mbps connections and Telkom's LTE service which they say will run at up to 150Mbps. You should compare prices for the connection, the size of the bundled data (at that speed you may start using a lot more data) and the cost per GB of additional bundles and 'out of bundle' data. We expect prices for 100Mbps to start at around R1,100.



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You may also want to compare what DFA has committed to on uptime and fault repairs with what Telkom can tell you on this.

I want something faster than ADSL. But I don't really know what speed I need.

ADSL services in Parkview are 'up to' 10Mbps. FTTH will offer you speeds from from 10Mbps right through to 100Mbps.

50Mbps is much faster than services on ADSL and packages should be available at these speeds (including data) from around R800. If you are not sure what speed you need, you may want to go for a service provider who will let you switch speeds up or down at a month's notice. That way you can try out the speed and choose the one that suits you. Alternatively you may want to avoid any long term contract and go month to month or pre-paid so you are free to change ISP at any time.

I want uncapped

Some Internet users who completed the survey were clear that they wanted an uncapped service. If you really need uncapped some of the ISPs on the the FTTH network will be offering uncapped at lower and higher speeds. Telkom are not offering uncapped. These may start at as low as R500 at lower speeds.

Uncapped at very fast speeds is generally expensive. This is because you will be able to download a lot more in a month than would be practical on ADSL and since very fast broadband is so new in South Africa ISPs may be unsure of how much data you will use. You could also consider whether a capped service might still meet your needs if the data costs are competitive. Some ISPs are charging as little as R2.50 per GB (which is 2.5c per MB). If you are looking at caps over 100GB, Telkom's LTE service may not be for you as the price per GB is over ten times higher than that on offer from some of the FTTH ISPs.

I am just as concerned about the overall quality of the service as I am about the speed

Speed certainly makes it quicker but other aspects of the quality of the service make a difference to your experience. We are working with DFA to monitor and publish information regularly on the quality of services from the ISPs so you can compare them. We hope this will help in enabling ISPs to compete not



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just on their prices but on the quality of the services they provide. You may also want to check on ISPs technical support commitments. We will be tracking this also.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is ConnectParkview?

Who are DFA?

What is the relationship between the PRA and DFA?

Why is the PRA doing this?

How will the community of Parkview benefit?

How much will it cost?

When will it start?

How do I sign up?

Which ISPs will I be able to sign up with?

Are the speeds offered by ISPs guaranteed?

Will I have to pay for connection/ installation?

Will there be a lot of disruption in the suburb?

Will DFA dig up my driveway or the verge outside my house?

Why will they put a box on my outside wall before I have even decided if I want fibre?

What about Telkom's new wireless broadband service?

What is ConnectParkview?

ConnectParkview is a project of the Parkview Residents Association (PRA) which is a voluntary association that works to improve Parkview and represent residents interests. For further information on the PRA contact Theresa Gibbon info@parkview.org.za. For more information on ConnectParkview contact connect@parkview.org.za

Who is Dark Fibre Africa?



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DFA finances, builds, installs, manages, and maintains a world-class dark fibre network to transmit metro and long-haul telecommunications traffic in South Africa. They have installed almost 8,000 kilometres of fibre infrastructure nationwide and invested over R5 billion.

Their headquarters are in Irene, Centurion. Their state-of-the-art network monitoring centre in Rivonia, Johannesburg, provides round-the-clock monitoring and maintenance to ensure that their network remains up and running 24/7.

What is the relationship between the PRA and DFA?

The PRA chose Dark Fibre Africa to partner with to bring Fibre to the Home in Parkview after issuing a request for proposals and conducting a competitive process comparing proposals. The PRA is negotiating an agreement with DFA on behalf of residents to ensure that residents get the best possible services and competitive prices now and in the future. DFA have already agreed to hold their prices to the participating service providers for five years which means they should hold or reduce their prices over time. The agreement will include commitments on network reliability - at least 99.95% uptime and on maximum times taken to restore faults - maximum of 8 hours. It will also cover the civil works - ensuring that DFA communicate effectively on where and when works will take place in your street and will respond quickly if and when there are any problems these works cause. While any licenced operator can and may provide alternative services in Parkview, what this agreement represents is an operator working in partnership with the community and being willing to commit to service levels for consumers - something of a rarity in the telecommunications industry.

Why is the PRA doing this?

Our goal is to increase choice for residents and to improve services in the suburb. Our survey showed that many residents are extremely unhappy with the current Internet service they get - usually ADSL delivered via phone lines. We also found that no businesses were planning to offer high quality alternatives any time soon. By being pro-active and requesting proposals, we got the major companies in the field, including Telkom, mobile operators and independent operators like DFA to respond and express interest in investing to create new services. This is a win for the suburb and for residents.

How will the community benefit?

We are aiming to use the new fibre network to ensure that everyone in the suburb, whether they are a homeowner or not, gets the benefit of Internet access. We will be working with the province to connect the public schools in the area and with Johannesburg to connect the library. DFA have also agreed to provide



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free connection points in Tyrone Avenue and George Hay park to enable public wifi access. We will be negotiating with ISPs to establish this as a free service available to all.

How much will fibre to the home cost me?

Prices start below R500 per month. For under than R900 per month you could have a very fast 50Mbps line with a phone, cheaper phone calls and 200GB internet cap per month – enough for a lot of movies – and all with 1GB of mobile data included. This would also enable you to drop your phone line altogether (saving R166.50 each month). For under R1,100 per month you could have a 100Mbps connection with 300GB of data or more.

So far, Afrihost, Cybersmart, Mweb, SA Digital Villages, Vodacom, Vox Telecom and XDSL have all agreed to offer services on DFA's FTTH network in Parkview. Other ISPs are expected to join soon. As more ISPs contract to access the network, we expect new services and prices to be announced. The bottom line is that FTTH will be a much better service than ADSL with prices competitive with our current ADSL prices, now and in the future.

When will I be able to get the new services?

DFA will be applying for the various permissions required over the next few weeks and will begin construction in January. The expected duration of the works is around 8-10 weeks. So the first services should be available from April 2015.

Which ISPs will I be able to choose from?

The network is an open access network. This means that any Internet Service Provider, if they can provide a quality service, can offer services to you. So far, Afrihost, Cybersmart, MWEB, SA Digital Villages, Vodacom, Vox Telecom and XDSL have all committed to offering services. Others may join soon.

Are the speeds offered by ISPs guaranteed?

At the prices ISPs are offering, their speeds are not guaranteed. The Fibre network within Parkview is capable of providing enough 'bandwidth' to ensure that the speed of service that you pay for will be delivered within Parkview and to the point where DFA network connects to the ISPs. After that, the actual speeds that you will get will depend on the amount of bandwidth that the ISP has secured within South Africa and internationally and the amount of customers they have sharing that bandwidth. To use an analogy, it will depend on the number of highway lanes the ISP has built or more likely leased and the number of cars they let onto them. We aim to monitor the performance of the ISPs to see which deliver better services in this respect. You can also look at rankings published by others like the mybroadband ISP survey.



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How do I sign up?

See the PRA website and facebook page for contact information on ISPs. If you want to be contacted by the ISPs who will be offering services on the new Fibre network please email info@parkview.org.za with 'Please contact me' in the Subject line and your name, address, email and phone contact details in the body of the email. You can choose which one offers a service that best suits you.

Will I have to pay for connection or installation?

If you are happy to sign a contract (usually 2 years) a number of ISPs will provide the connection and installation for free. If you prefer to go month-to-month or pre-paid you may have to pay for the cabling from your outside wall to your house and installation of the router inside your house though this should cost between R1,400 and R1,800 as a once-off payment.

How will the network be built?

DFA will dig trenches in the streets to run cables throughout the suburb. Each house will get a small box mounted on their outside wall with a tiny fibre cable inside it. After this, you can get a connection in your house by contacting one of the ISPs who will arrange for installation of a small box inside your house.

Wherever possible, DFA will be using 'micro-trenching' to lay the fibre cable – using a machine to cut a very narrow trench just a few centimetres wide which is much neater and quicker than conventional trenching, minimising disruption and damage. They have also committed to creating a hotline to ensure that where there are problems during the trenching and rehabilitation, they are dealt with quickly.

Will there be a lot of disruption in the suburb?

We have had a lot of trenching and digging the suburb over the years. At the moment Johannesburg Water and some telecommunications companies are digging the streets. In general unfortunately, these companies - if they have necessary licences and permissions from the Road Agency etc - don't have to ask us or even tell us when they do these things.

Both ourselves and DFA are very aware of how irritating (or worse) these works can be. DFA will be using an advanced technique called 'micro-trenching' which involves much smaller trenching and much quicker restoration wherever conditions allow.

In order to minimise disruption and address issues that occur DFA has agreed that:



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- a. there will be a detailed communications plan on where and when trenching will take place (so residents will know whether it is DFA or not and for how long there maybe inconvenience)
- b. there will be a means of reporting any problem (probably via phone and email)
- c. they will agree to standards - time to respond to a problem and time to restore

So although DFA can't entirely stop the annoyance of roadworks, at least they are making unusual efforts to ensure that they will be able to be held accountable, that disruption is minimised, and problems are addressed as quickly as possible. Even the fact that they are willing to negotiate these issues in detail with us in advance is a rather different situation to the one we have found ourselves in previously.

Will DFA dig up my driveway or the verge outside my house?

DFA may need to dig along the pavement or verge outside your house to cable your street if they cannot use the road (this will depend on the Johannesburg Road Agency and what other pipes and cables are on the street). They will also dig a small trench from the street cable to a point on the outside wall of your house to create an access point for your house. They will do this for every house in the suburb.

Why does DFA want to put a box outside my house even if I haven't decided whether I want fibre to the home?

The fibre and box needs to be installed at the time that they are doing all the works. It is being done at no cost to you. If it was done later, it would be very expensive to bring staff and equipment back to do this work. The fact that you have this connection should add value to your property and means that you can ask to be connected at any time - now or in the future.

What about Telkom's new wireless broadband service?

Since we announced our intention to find a partner to install an FTTH network, Telkom has responded by launching a wireless broadband service. It appears to be a good service and the PRA welcomes the additional competition which should be good for residents. But as a recent mybroadband review states, at R1,399 and a three year contract period, you should consider the other options from ISPs on FTTH carefully before signing up.



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Glossary

For many residents all these new acronyms are not helping in understanding what new services are on offer. 'LTE', 'FTTH', 'Mbps' and 'GB' come to mind from some of the literature that you may have already received. Here's some information on the terms you may come across in the offers that service providers make.

ADSL

ADSL is the technology most residents use to connect to the Internet. It operates on our copper wire phone lines. How well it works depends on your distance from the exchange and on the quality of the network. Some of the network is subject to regular faults caused by problems such as rain leading to water in the conduits that carry the copper cables.

Data

Everything on the Internet is 'data'. ISPs charge you according to how much data you use (receive or send). Data is usually measured in units of KB (KiloBytes), MB (MegaBytes) or GB (GigaBytes).

FTTH

FTTH stands for Fibre to the Home. The DFA network will enable every home in Parkview to connect to the Internet via a glass fibre that uses light rather than electricity to send data. Fibre is widely recognised as the fastest and most reliable technology for the Internet. It is the main way that Internet traffic is moved around the country and between South Africa and the rest of the world. Parkview will be one of the very first suburbs in the country to have FTTH available to all homes.

GB

GB is short for GigaByte. It is the main unit of measurement used for the amount of data you use and be charged for by your ISP. A Byte is a small quantity of data. A text email may be only a few KB (or Kilobytes or thousand Bytes). A photograph, depending on its size and quality may be up to a few Megabytes (or million Bytes). An HD movie maybe 3 or more GB - a thousand million Bytes.

When you choose a service, unless you choose an 'upcapped' one, you will be buying a fixed amount of GB per month. If you run over this, you will pay an amount per GB. Make sure you know how much you



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are paying. ISPs on the Parkview FTTH network are offering some of the lowest prices available for data - as low as R2.5 per GB.

ISP

ISP Stands for Internet Service Provider. Dark Fibre Africa are building an 'Open Access' network in Parkview. This means that a range of independent Internet Service Providers will be able to offer services to you over the DFA network. You will pay one of these ISPs to access the Internet. The ISP will pay DFA for using their network to reach you in your home (as they now pay Telkom to connect to your home via your phone line).

LTE

LTE, also known as 4G, is the latest mobile network technology. It is considerably faster than 3G. Generally used to connect mobile phones, Telkom is using the latest version of LTE, LTE-Advanced to connect home devices onto the Internet to provide a very fast Internet service in Parkview, competing with Fibre (see FTTH).

Mbps

Mbps stands for Megabits per second. It is a unit of measurement of the speed at which bits of data are transmitted. Different network technologies have different speed limitations. ADSL in Parkview runs from 2Mbps to 10Mbps. A variation of ADSL, VDSL can run faster than this but is not available at the moment in Parkview. The FTTH network in Parkview will be available at speeds up to 100Mbps and even up to 1Gbps which is the same as 1,000Mbps.

Open Access

The FTTH network in Parkview will be Open Access. This means that any licenced ISP can make their services available to you as long as they pay a fee to Dark Fibre Africa. The PRA believes that an open access network is in the best interests of residents as it ensures competition and lower prices.

Voice over IP or VoIP

VoIP is an alternative telephone service to your fixed line service. It is available on FTTH but not on Telkom's LTE service. Calls are cheaper and you can save over R160 pm by cancelling your phone line.

For further information or to get in touch:
Facebook page: Parkview, Johannesburg
Twitter: @ConnectParkview
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