

WHAT IS FIBER-OPTIC BROADBAND?

As more of daily life is carried out online, the importance of having high-speed, reliable Internet access grows for residents, businesses, schools, healthcare organizations and governments. Fiber-optic broadband is a solution that accommodates current and future needs for Internet access.

Fiber-optic broadband provides Internet connectivity to homes and businesses through very small strands of glass instead of the copper wire found in traditional services such as DSL and cable. Fiber-optic broadband uses pulses of light to transmit data at greater speeds and with more reliability. Compared with traditional broadband, fiber-optic broadband speeds are typically 10 to 100 times faster, enabling residents and businesses to use more devices and applications simultaneously without slowdowns or connection issues. This means faster, more reliable access to the Internet.

DOES THE CITY OWN ANY FIBER RESOURCES IN FORT COLLINS?

Yes. The City currently has ownership or rights to many miles of underground conduit and fiber that is currently used to support the City's operations. Some of this fiber could be used to support fiber-optic broadband expansion in the community; however, the City needs to analyze if and how its current resources may be used to achieve this goal.

As the demand for affordable, next-generation broadband increases, the community must define the role the City plays in how these services develop in Fort Collins. Next-generation broadband has become critical for communities in the 21st century and cities across the country are considering their options to ensure their communities are connected.



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CITY OF FORT COLLINS

2015 BROADBAND INTERNET & SB-152

As the demand for more advanced, reliable and affordable broadband service rises, the City must define its ongoing role. "Next generation" high-speed internet services are becoming important infrastructure for communities in the 21st century.



This information from the City of Fort Collins answers frequent questions about broadband internet and SB-152.

UNDERSTANDING COLORADO SENATE BILL 152

Colorado Senate Bill 05-152 (SB-152) is a measure passed by the Colorado Legislature in 2005. Its intent was to limit governments from competing with the private sector. Among other provisions, it requires local governments to secure voter approval before entering into the broadband business. Without such approval, the law limits the ability of Colorado cities to provide a wide spectrum of services, including:

- Free Internet service in city libraries, parks and community centers (while these services are provided by most governments, they are nonetheless prohibited by the law and could be challenged by existing Internet access providers)
- Leveraging government fiber infrastructure and partnering with private businesses to provide affordable and high-speed Internet service throughout the entire community
- Directly providing Internet and other broadband services to residents and businesses

HOW WOULD AN EXEMPTION FROM SB-152 BENEFIT FORT COLLINS?

A voter-approved exemption from SB-152 would restore the City's autonomy and ability to evaluate all possibilities for next-generation broadband services in Fort Collins. An exemption supports local choice and options, allowing the City and citizens to make the best decisions based on the needs of our community.

Fort Collins is home to Colorado State University and an outstanding public school system that use the Internet for world-class research and business. Fort Collins is also home to a unique blend of big and small technology companies and other innovative, unique businesses. Fort Collins has a tech-savvy culture and a strong economic base with diverse employment opportunities that could benefit from enhanced broadband services.

Some of the outcomes could include:

Intensified Innovation by local businesses and entrepreneurs who are already nationally recognized for spurring new startups, ideas and technologies. Better access to high-speed broadband would increase the City's ability to retain companies that demand this level of service.

A More Connected Community, with new avenues for public engagement in local decision-making, new frontiers for digital governance, and new opportunities for connected social spaces and creative networking.

Enhanced Efficiency and Improved Quality of Life, as Fort Collins residents and businesses would be able to do more, more quickly and with less frustration, leaving more time for enjoying the great outdoors.

Inclusive Internet Access, by partnering with local institutions such as CSU, Front Range Community College and the Downtown Business Association to ensure that more citizens are connected and empowered to participate, innovate, and succeed thereby reducing the digital divide.

Reductions in Carbon as high-speed Internet empowers employees to work more effectively from home and allows local businesses to support clients worldwide, without having to travel.



HOW WOULD THIS IMPACT MY INTERNET ACCESS?

The City's goal is to ensure that our residents, businesses and community anchors are equipped with the Internet services they need, now and in the future. There are many ways that the City can support development of next-generation broadband in our community and we will explore all feasible options to achieve this goal.

ARE OTHER COLORADO CITIES EXEMPT FROM SB-152?

Voters in nearly a dozen Colorado cities and counties have exempted themselves from SB-152, passing measures that affirm their local choice to decide how broadband services develop in these communities. Exemptions have been approved in Boulder, Longmont and Estes Park.

Dozens of other states in the U.S. and many other countries allow and encourage local governments to be actively involved in how broadband develops within their jurisdictions. In the US alone, more than 500 cities and counties have actively used their infrastructure and resources to expand broadband for the benefit of their communities.