

What is broadband fiber?

Broadband fiber is fiber-optic cable, typically run underground. Fiber carries information from one place to another as pulses of light. Fiber-optic connections are very reliable and can quickly carry large amounts of data over long distances. Fiber-optic network speeds are typically 100 megabits to 10 gigabits per second, compared to 20 to 100 megabits per second for a typical cable Internet connection.

Fiber-optic cable provides a symmetrical connection, allowing data to flow in both directions simultaneously with no reduction in speed. Unlike cable Internet, fiber-optic cable is a dedicated Internet connection and is not shared with cable services.

Does the city own existing broadband fiber in Boulder?

Yes. The city currently has ownership or rights to many miles of underground conduit and dark fiber (fiber-optic cables not connected to broadband equipment) that could be made available for the benefit of the community.

What this ballot item is

If voters approve this ballot item, Boulder would be exempted from a state law that otherwise purports to limit the city from improving the community's broadband capabilities. With this exemption, the city would be permitted to establish business partnerships with private companies to increase the community's access to high-speed broadband Internet, opt to provide this service itself, or develop a combined strategy to benefit city residents and business users.

What this ballot item is not

This ballot item would not prevent any private business, including existing broadband providers, from initiating or continuing to provide these services. Unlike cities that have approved similar initiatives, like Longmont, Boulder has no plans to create a public broadband utility. Passage of this measure would allow the city to explore a variety of options to make its assets available to serve the broadband needs of Boulder residents, students and businesses.

Ballot Question Specific Language

Affirming the City's Right to Provide Telecommunication Services

Shall the City of Boulder be authorized to provide high-speed Internet services (advanced services), telecommunications services, and/or cable television services to residents, businesses, schools, libraries, nonprofit entities and other users of such services, either directly or indirectly with public or private sector partners, as expressly permitted by §§ 29-27-101 to 304, "Competition in Utility and Entertainment Services," of the Colorado Revised Statutes, without limiting its home rule authority?

Learn more at
bouldercolorado.gov/broadband



City of Boulder

2014

City of Boulder Election Ballot Question

Do voters wish to affirm their city's right to provide telecommunications services, advanced services and cable television services, or more specifically high-speed broadband Internet access?



PRINTED ON 100% RECYCLED PAPER

This information from the City of Boulder answers frequent questions about this ballot item. It is not intended to urge a vote for or against this initiative.

Tell me more about 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 infrastructure and partnering with private businesses to provide affordable and high-speed Internet service throughout the entire community; and
- » direct provision of broadband services by municipal governments.

How would an exemption from SB-152 benefit Boulder?

A voter-approved exemption from SB-152 would restore the telecommunications and cable autonomy that all Colorado cities had prior to 2005.

Boulder's highly educated community members use the Internet for activities ranging from world-class climate research, to online learning and collaboration, to home entertainment. Boulder is an ideal place to install higher-speed broadband Internet because of its tech-savvy population and innovative businesses. Teleworking and home-based businesses are common in Boulder, and each could significantly benefit from increased broadband speed at affordable rates.

Specific 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 need and 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 wired social spaces and creative networking.

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

- » **Inclusive Internet Access** as the City of Boulder works with partners like CU, BVSD, Boulder Housing Partners and the Boulder Community Foundation to ensure that everyone in the community is wired,

connected and empowered to participate, innovate and succeed, eliminating the digital divide.

- » **Cuts in Carbon** as high-speed connections empower employees to work more effectively from home and allow local businesses to support clients worldwide, without having to travel by plane.

So would this make our Internet service faster?

Depending on the way the city chooses to utilize this equipment, yes, it could.

Broadband technology has advanced significantly since 2005, particularly the technology that enables what Boulder residents and businesses regard as "high-speed" service. Broadband fiber increases Internet connection and browsing speeds, allowing users to more quickly access online information and resources.

How about prices?

Provision of Internet access in public spaces, such as parks and community centers, would likely be free.

Ensuring competitive prices for service elsewhere would be a key goal for any partnership or service the city considers.

Are other Colorado cities exempt from SB-152?

Over the past three years, voters in three Colorado cities – Longmont, Centennial and Montrose – passed measures allowing their governments the right to provide certain broadband services, either directly in the case of Longmont, or indirectly in Centennial and Montrose.

When is election day?
Tuesday, Nov. 4, 2014

