

Creating Broadband Equity

A REFERRED MEASURE FOR AN EXEMPTION FROM SENATE BILL 152

Denver City Councilman, Paul Kashmann • District 6

Creating Broadband Equity

- **Why is broadband equity important?**
- **Gaps Exist In Denver's Broadband Infrastructure**
- **What is SB-152?**
- **Why should Denver seek an exemption from SB-152?**



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Why is broadband equity important?

- **The internet is the entry point into the world of information** in the same way as brick-and-mortar libraries have been for centuries. Equal access to information is an American imperative.
- **The importance of higher speed Internet** for businesses and families continues to increase, as do requirements for higher speeds and greater bandwidth.
- **Businesses need higher speeds to compete**, capture economic opportunities and drive efficiencies. Schools and students need higher speed internet services to link students to knowledge.
- **Households need better broadband** for kids' homework, civic engagement, home-based work, and entertainment.



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Gaps Exist In Denver's Broadband Connectivity

- **Depending on the cards you're dealt** – income, education level, race, zip code etc. - you may have advantage or disadvantage where internet connectivity is concerned. Families must have internet access, devices to connect to the internet and the knowledge to use them effectively.



- **“US Census data shows 20% of Denver’s households don’t have broadband.** Many are in low-income neighborhoods in the northern and western parts of the city.” (Diana DeGette, at 2019 Colorado Smart Cities Summit.)
- **“We estimate some 3,000 to 4,000 students** do not have internet access at home.” Mark Ferrandino, DPS
- **Denver Public Library distributes over 100 hot spots** for internet connectivity and has a waiting list of 2 months.

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What is SB-152?

- **SB-152, passed by the Colorado legislature in 2005, prohibits cities and counties from:**
 - **Investing in broadband services** and/or infrastructure for homes and businesses.
 - **Creating a private/public partnership** that would leverage government infrastructure to provide affordable and high-speed Internet service
 - **SB-152 assumes incorrectly that the private sector will provide adequate service** – services that are good enough for businesses to compete and its citizens to thrive. Economic development and social equity are not top priorities for private carriers - or part of their own business model.

Why should Denver seek an exemption?

- **An exemption puts the authority to decide next steps in the hands of local residents.**
- **Communities can conduct a feasibility study** to see what full connection in their community would cost and what it could mean in terms of economic and social advancement.
- Local authorities can look into potential public-private partnerships **or even sit down to negotiate with the region's current Internet providers.**
- **Most often cities seek to opt out of SB-152 as step one in exploring options.** Many cities that “opt out” have no desire to build or manage a network, but they do want the freedom to do so if it is their only option. Opting out gives your community options.
- **Opting out of SB-152 sends a clear message that status quo for your community is not good enough** and sets the stage towards investigating remedies in the form of public investment, partnerships, etc.

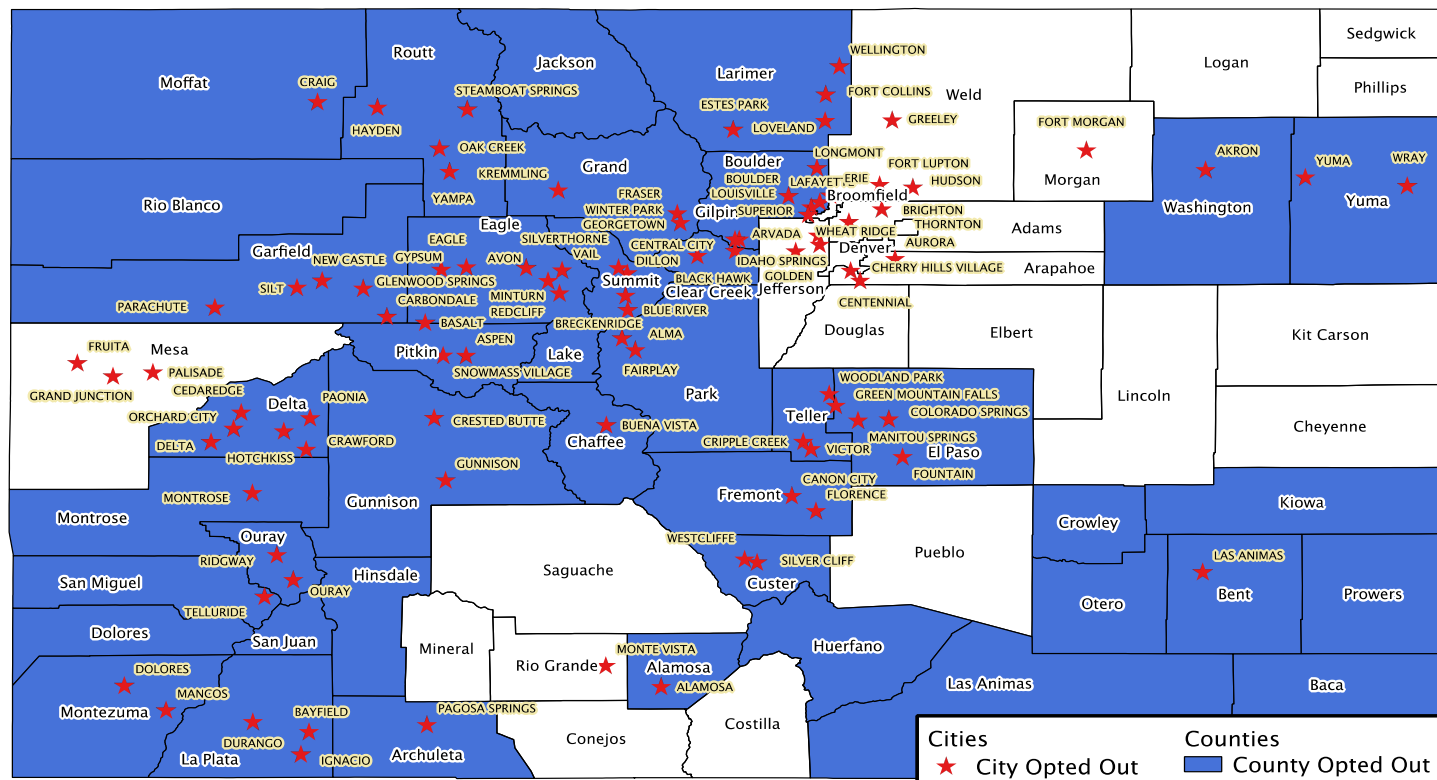
Why should Denver seek an exemption? - continued

► **Does opting out of SB-152 bind local taxpayers to provide local funds?**

No. Opting out of SB-152 simply removes the local prohibition on expending public funds to provide service and allows local jurisdictions to explore and develop plans for their communities. If any jurisdiction gets to the point where they are looking to invest public funds they must follow their own guidelines for doing so.

Cities & Counties Exempt From SB-152

Colorado Cities & Counties Exempt from SB-152



Map Revision: January 2, 2020



Map by Trent Pingenot

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Why should Denver NOT seek an exemption from SB-152?

- Beats me

Endorsement

► Denver Public Library

“Denver Public Library (DPL) is heavily invested and committed to reducing inequities in our community and creating a more digitally inclusive city. To that end we are founding partners of the *Denver Digital Equity Coalition* and involved in the *National Digital Inclusion Alliance*. Before the current pandemic, we saw daily how strongly the digital divide affects many in our community. They came to us for connection to the internet, devices to use to connect, and training on how to best use online resources. The crisis we are living through now underscores the importance of broadband access in the home and threatens to widen the digital divide. As more of society’s essential functions move online, those without access in the home will be left further behind.

For these reasons, DPL wholeheartedly supports Councilman Kashmann’s efforts to bring to ballot a referred measure to exempt Denver from SB 152. As a community, we need the flexibility to explore more options to make in-home broadband accessible and affordable to all, and we can’t do it quickly enough.” *Zeth Lietzau, Director of Collections, Technology and Strategy, Denver Public Library*

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Kind of . . .

- ▶ “I am comfortable with this measure going to the voters. I would add that analyzing broadband equity is included in Technology Services’ Strategic Plan, so we will continue to advance and enhance our partnerships with the private sector to help close the digital divide”.

Mayor Michael B. Hancock

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Questions?