

From: [Wes Mills](#)
To: [KCC - Committee Assistants \(Email Group\)](#)
Subject: King County Broadband, Government Accountability and Oversight Committee - Public Comment
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Good evening County Councilmembers,

I am writing to comment on the EasTrail project and, specifically, why fiber laid as part of this project should, and could, become a major link for public broadband in eastern King County. The King County Council has done a lot of work in addressing digital equity and gaps in digital community building and Internet access. Thank you for that work; now, we can and should go farther.

I live in King County District 1, where we have a mix of areas with high quality private competition for Internet access, resulting in lower prices and faster speeds alongside areas where very slow copper-based DSL continues to be the norm and spotty mobile data service means connectivity is difficult. This is why I am also a volunteer for Upgrade King County, because we can do better.

For example, my home address is served by three providers each ranging from 60Mbps to 1,000Mbps of download speed, for between \$40 and \$80 per month. However, just one city to the south, many Renton residents are paying an average of twice (or more!) of that money and getting lower speeds and data caps. They have to cobble together solutions with cell phones and added data charges and bundling extra unneeded services to keep costs stable.

The private business market can be good at delivering a lot of things. Cost-effective, competitive wired Internet is not one of them because the costs of entry are so high that many private companies cannot or refuse to make that investment.

King County can make that investment. Fully-private ownership of telecommunications infrastructure need not be the norm. King County can use fiber along EasTrail to make a publicly-owned, open access network, like Kitsap PUD and I-Net already do, that leases capacity for private businesses and non-profits and cooperative groups to provide service. King County provides the infrastructure, the groups provide the features, support, and outreach.

The pandemic has shown that basic connectivity is urgent. We can't keep hoping that private phone and cable companies will do the right thing and spend the money equally across the county. EasTrail is our opportunity to take a big leap forward; let's do it.

Thank you,
Wes Mills
98125