



Legislation Text

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Clerk 02/20/2020

A MOTION acknowledging receipt of the report required by Ordinance 18835, Section 118, Proviso P1, that provides options for increasing broadband internet access in unserved or underserved areas of the county.

WHEREAS, the King County council adopted Ordinance 18835, Section 118, Proviso P1, on November 13, 2018, and

WHEREAS, that proviso requires the information technology department to deliver a report containing the options for increasing broadband Internet access in unserved or underserved areas of the county, and

WHEREAS, as required by the proviso, the report includes definitions for "unserved" and "underserved," a description of the geographic areas in King County that are unserved or underserved, a description of existing and planned efforts to expand access to broadband service and an evaluation of the options for the county to expand broadband access at the household level and community level, and

WHEREAS, the report provides the options available with the county's institutional network, noting any existing limitations and also including: the timeline for the institutional network lease renewal; options available with the community connectivity consortium, noting any existing limitations; and emerging technologies such as 5G wireless home service, and

WHEREAS, the report was commissioned by King County in recognition that those who lack broadband face enormous disadvantages, and that those disadvantages will grow as our economy and society become more broadband-dependent in the coming decades, and

WHEREAS, the county's unincorporated areas are the most likely to suffer from lack of availability of

broadband service because adequate broadband infrastructure does not currently exist. Those are the county's unserved areas. Filling that gap will be costly and high-risk because building new broadband infrastructure requires massive capital investment, whether public or private, as well as ongoing operating risk, and

WHEREAS, to address those unserved areas, the report recommends grant and private sector partnership strategies that could serve to reduce the rural broadband challenge. The report recommends efforts to work with the private sector and to leverage state and federal competitive grant programs, and

WHEREAS, even where broadband service is available in King County, there exist critical challenges related to affordability, digital literacy and access to devices. Those challenges, which research has shown to disproportionately impact lower-income members of the community and communities of color, put these underserved members of the community at huge disadvantage relative to others with respect to basic functions such as education, health care, small-business development and access to government services, and

WHEREAS, to address those underserved needs, the report recommends infrastructure and private sector partnership strategies designed to efficiently enable some underserved King County residents to access the broadband internet, and

WHEREAS, the report plan demonstrates alignment and support for the King County Strategic Plan and executive priorities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

Receipt of the Broadband Access Study is acknowledged.