



2022 City Council Candidate Questions

CITY OPERATIONS

Are you in favor of the Palo Alto Fiber project that proposes to build Fiber to the Home? Why or why not?

ALEX COMSA

This project requires LOTS of resources and I would not view it as a top priority. I am all in with regards to supporting disadvantaged communities in general, but the private sector is addressing the HS internet and the city could look into subsidizing some of these services for disadvantaged communities. So no, I am not in favor of the PA Fiber project at this moment.

LISA FORSELL

I'd like to start with a pilot fiber program in a part of the city that is poorly served by the incumbents (eg AT&T, Comcast). And any new neighborhoods that are built as we expand housing options in Palo Alto, should receive municipal fiber service.

BRIAN HAMACHEK

Palo Alto is known as the birthplace of Silicon Valley, yet less than 20% of residents say they are "very satisfied" with their current internet service. Fiber internet service will enable speeds far greater than what is currently available over existing coaxial cable lines. Beyond just faster internet, it's hard to predict the sort of benefits and opportunities this would provide. When most homes were using dial-up to access the internet, it would have been impossible to predict many of the services that we now take for granted each day. Fiber has the potential to be just as revolutionary in our daily lives. I believe that if Palo Alto wants to continue to be seen as a city of innovation, it needs to be on the frontlines for these changes. Therefore I feel that pursuing municipal fiber is critical for Palo Alto.

ED LAUING

I lean toward yes. Who wouldn't want to untether from Comcast!? If our residents get better reliability and lower price, that is highly appealing and polls on user interest appear to be high. But the upfront cost also is high. And I question if the city should really step up and manage another utility – especially at the investment level required.

JULIE LYTHCOTT-HAIMS

Yes! Despite being in the heart of Silicon Valley, we have terrible WiFi here at our house – which was a source of great embarrassment to me when my public speaking career went virtual during the pandemic and my internet would lag. People would say "where ARE you" and I'd say "Palo Alto" and they'd say "PALO ALTO has bad internet???" Um, yeah, at least on my street! I have both AT&T and Comcast in the hope that one will be working when the other one isn't! (Which is a privilege, I realize!) In an economy and culture that increasingly depends on the internet, I believe the city is responsible for providing its citizens with fast and dependable internet service. It's the key to participation in our schools and in our democracy and it's the way to ensure equal access to information. (I am also a "net neutral" person.)

DORIA SUMMA

Clearly fiber to every home in Palo Alto is a worthy goal. I am still studying the options and want to ensure that the city is not engaging on an expensive project at citizen expense that could be better provided by existing providers or alternative methods of Internet delivery. But, again, I need to understand the options better before expressing an opinion.

VICKI VEENKER

Yes. I agree with the City that creating Palo Alto Fiber would provide faster resolution times and service excellence, competitive pricing to customers, and it keeps dollars local. Public investment in broadband infrastructure should also create competition, improving services and keeping costs down. Providing locally owned high-speed internet allows the City to retain and attract companies, further developing a diverse and robust local economy.