



**Mike McGinn, Mayor**  
City of Seattle

October 1, 2013

Mr. Brian Hsi  
Citizens' Telecommunications & Technology Advisory Board  
Seattle Department of Information Technology  
P.O. Box 94709  
Seattle, WA 98124-4709

Dear Mr. Hsi,

Thank you for your letter of September 12, on behalf of the Citizens' Telecommunications & Technology Advisory Board (CTTAB) encouraging quicker action on the City's part to improve delivery of broadband service in Seattle's communities. I appreciate CTTAB's willingness to offer suggestions and support for public dialogue around this issue.

I am committed to achieving the outcomes that you address in your letter—that Seattle fosters an environment that encourages high speed broadband service while managing and supporting the many competing uses in our public rights-of-way. I agree with your assessment that this is a delicate balance and one that has many stakeholder perspectives.

Preserving the use of our rights-of-way and public spaces for public use is an important issue for me. The public rights-of-way are a significant resource that the city holds in trust for the community and must adopt and enforce regulations that balance the competing interests for its use. The staff at Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is charged with managing this public space resource on behalf of the community in a manner that best preserves public safety and welfare and supports the principal function of right-of-way: mobility.

Telecommunications companies often have a more singular focus, which is to deploy a network in a cost-efficient and expedient manner, and their primary interests can be in conflict with the desires of neighborhoods and communities who want to preserve and beautify their rights-of-way. Daily, I have conversations with people throughout the city who have great ownership of the right-of-way and many ideas for how to best activate it including building greenways, maximizing the benefits of our urban forest by adding more street trees, adding bicycle racks and benches, building swales and rain gardens, putting in wayfinding signs and kiosks, and preserving space for gardening.

I am also concerned that many of the current telecommunications boxes in the right-of-way can be targets for graffiti and are not designed to integrate with the neighborhood. These boxes can have an impact on property values and the desirability and livability of communities. Because of these concerns, I have instructed SDOT to propose legislation that incentivizes broadband companies to invest in technological solutions that minimizes the impact to our public spaces. I believe the City should encourage broadband companies who can commission engineers and manufacturers to deploy smaller devices or to invest in installing the technology to underground these devices. Broadband companies should also invest in the well-being and livability our neighborhoods; if their impact to the public right of way is large, they should offer to sufficiently mitigate those impacts.

Seattle City Hall, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
600 Fourth Avenue  
PO Box 94749  
Seattle, WA 98124-4749

Tel (206) 684-4000  
Fax (206) 684-5360  
[www.seattle.gov/mayor](http://www.seattle.gov/mayor)  
[mike.mcgin@seattle.gov](mailto:mike.mcgin@seattle.gov)

Mr. Brian Hsi  
October 1, 2013  
Page 2

SDOT staff continue to keep me apprised of the efforts they are taking to engage with stakeholders and draft new legislation to create a more predictable process for siting telecommunication cabinets. They have been clear with me that the current regulations in Director's Rule 2-2009 Telecommunications Facilities in the Public Right of Way is problematic and results in an unpredictable process for both residents and project proponents. They are looking into how other cities address this same set of issues to inform their work. I understand that a recent meeting of SDOT and stakeholders resulted in some additional clarity on direction, next steps and timelines as well as underscoring the need to define a public outreach plan.

I support the current plan—that by the end of November, SDOT will craft draft legislation that balances the following three policy priorities:

1. Improve broadband deployment, especially in underserved areas
2. Keep our public spaces and rights-of-way free from visual clutter and in a state of good repair
3. Ensure other priorities for our public spaces and rights-of-way are still viable including green stormwater infrastructure, public gathering and play areas, tree canopy coverage, gardening and other activation and community building goals

I want to make sure that the legislation, and any future permitting decisions around the siting of cabinets receives robust public input. I believe that the best forum for this debate is through the transparency of the legislative process. I look forward to engaging City Councilmembers on this important issue and will continue to press for resolution in early 2014.

Finally, I'd like to thank you personally for your service on the CTTAB—I will continue to take direct action to improve broadband access for our communities and appreciate the professionalism and volunteer time spent by the CTTAB to ensure technology meets the needs of our communities.

Sincerely,



Mike McGinn  
Mayor

Copy: Councilmember Bruce Harrell  
Peter Hahn, Director of Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)  
Lenda Crawford, Deputy Director, SDOT  
Erin Devoto, Chief Technology Officer, Department of Information Technology (DoIT)  
David Keyes, DoIT  
Robert Dolin, CTTAB  
Dana Lewis, CTTAB  
Stacey Wedlake, CTTAB  
Ben Krokower, CTTAB  
Beryl Fernandes, CTTAB  
Daniel Hoang, CTTAB  
Nourisha Wells, CTTAB  
Barbara Gray, SDOT  
Brian de Place, SDOT