



**Citizens' Telecommunications
& Technology Advisory Board**
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To: Honorable Mayor of Seattle, Michael McGinn and Director of Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), Peter Hahn

CC: Councilmember Bruce Harrell, Erin Devoto, David Keyes, Barbara Gray, Brian de Place, CTTAB

Date: September 12, 2013

Re: Taking action on SDOT Director's Rule to improve broadband

Dear Mayor McGinn and Director Hahn:

For several years, the Citizens' Telecommunications and Technology Advisory Board (CTTAB) has heard concerns about reliable broadband options in the City of Seattle. Community members and broadband service providers have voiced strong concern about current regulations in SDOT's Director's Rule (2-2009 Telecommunications Facilities in the Public Right of Way, Excluding Utility Poles and Attachment Specifications and Procedures) that seem to impede timely rollout of improved internet access.

During the course of 2013, CTTAB has heard from community participants during our monthly board meetings and also at our Broadband and Cable committee meetings. SDOT staff Brian De Place and Barbara Gray presented at our April 9, 2013 board meeting. Two of our committee members subsequently participated in the Telecom Cabinet Working Group meeting with SDOT on July 15, 2013.

As you may be aware, CTTAB is quite interested in fostering an environment for high speed broadband. Specifically in an earlier statement on broadband access in Seattle we stated:

Access to a broadband internet connection at all premises in the city is the critical – indeed, the cornerstone – technology that will enable Seattle's citizens, businesses and institutions to compete and thrive in the global marketplace. State-of-the-art internet access is essential to Seattle's ability to compete and lead in the 21st Century global economy. CTTAB envisions access to the internet for all Seattle citizens, businesses, and institutions that is fast, fair, and everywhere.

Given our interest in fostering an environment that encourages high speed broadband throughout the City, and our central role in public engagement involving technology issues, **we believe that it is imperative that:**

- **SDOT take action to revise these rules**
- **A timeline for action is provided to CTTAB and the public**

We believe in the need to balance between maintaining our public right-of-way while promoting greater investment in broadband access. It is a delicate balance, to be sure, between improving our city's broadband infrastructure, respecting our neighborhoods' environments and respecting the wishes of property owners affected by the installation of telecommunications cabinets. Regardless, it is clear to CTTAB that the current situation is untenable, and represents a wildly imbalanced approach to the issue. Little to no consideration is



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given to the improvement of our city's broadband infrastructure with the Director's Rule written as it is today. Technology upgrades and the broadband access of entire neighborhoods are in the hands of a single property owner, and there is no countervailing input, regardless of the community's needs. This situation needs to change.

Improving the manner in which our communities and neighborhoods receive timely upgrades to their telecommunications infrastructure should be a primary component of a city-wide push towards comprehensive broadband growth. A change to the rule complements the strides the City has made with the excess fiber ordinance and the upcoming Gigabit Squared rollout by bringing significant enhancements to neighborhoods with inadequate broadband connectivity or competitive options.

CTTAB stands ready to work with the City of Seattle to do what it takes to get this rule changed in a way that will benefit Seattle's residents. As an advisory board, we can help solicit public input for any proposed changes to the Director's Rule in addition to raising broader awareness of these issues. What is not an option though, is continued delayed action.

As a starting point, we ask that the SDOT Director provide a timeline for action on changes to the Director's Rule in order for us to plan any public engagement strategies to assist the City with their outreach efforts around this issue.

We look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Hsi".

Brian Hsi, Chair of the Broadband and Cable committee,
on behalf of the Citizens' Telecommunications and Technology Advisory Board

Cc: Members of CTTAB
Councilmember Bruce Harrell
Erin Devoto, Chief Technology Officer
David Keyes, DoIT
Barbara Gray, SDOT
Brian de Place, SDOT