



City of Bellingham, Washington

Cable Television Franchise Renewal Informal Needs Assessment Report

**Prepared by City staff with input from Moss & Barnett
As part of Comcast Cable Franchise Renewal Project**

AUGUST 10, 2010

CITY OF BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON
CABLE TELEVISION FRANCHISE RENEWAL
Informal Needs Assessment Report – August 10, 2010

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide City policy makers and the community at large with information about the future cable related needs and interests of Bellingham in response to Comcast's request for renewal of its cable television franchise. The report provides summary information in the Executive Summary, further information in the body of the report, and also provides comprehensive information received from the public in a series of exhibits.

The current cable franchise agreement with Comcast was signed almost 15 years ago and expires in February 2011. This report will serve as a source of information about community needs and interests related to Comcast's franchise and services.

After reviewing this report with City Elected Officials, the City project team will prepare franchise documentation in the form of a Cable Television Franchise Ordinance ("Proposed Franchise") which will incorporate appropriate language to address all of the City's identified needs and interests. Policy makers will subsequently provide direction to the City project team negotiating with Comcast on the cable franchise renewal.

Inspection of Comcast Physical Plant

A physical plant inspection of Bellingham's Comcast cable system was conducted in May 2010.

The inspection was incorporated into the City's project plan because City staff were unaware of any prior review of Comcast's cable system in the community. The inspection was conducted by the Kramer.Firm, which has significant expertise and experience in conducting this type of inspection.

Following is an excerpt from the Executive Summary version of the Kramer.Firm final report:

Introduction

At the direction of the City of Bellingham, Kramer.Firm, Inc. conducted an outside plant safety compliance inspection of Comcast Cable. The inspection was conducted from May 24, 2010 through May 26, 2010.

The purpose of this inspection was to gauge Comcast's level of compliance with the National Electrical Safety Code, governing outside plant construction (i.e., pole-to-pole, and underground systems), and the National Electrical Code, governing construction and installation safety issues at homes and businesses attached to Comcast's system.

Summary of Findings

Based on our inspection of hundreds of thousands of miles of cable plant in over 500 communities around the United States over the past twenty-six years we find that the Comcast system in City of Bellingham, Washington to be ABOVE average.

We found relatively few outside distribution plant infractions, indicating a system that is well built and for the most part, properly maintained. Power supplies and distribution plant were properly bonded to the electrical network as required. Although some infractions were observed, cable sag control and grounding installation and maintenance in the Comcast system were generally superior to other comparable systems we have inspected.

While the distribution plant was generally well maintained, we found numerous subscriber installation infractions. Specifically, Comcast's use of power masts as a point of connection for their coaxial cables is of serious concern. The number of installations affected by these problems is significant and may range in the thousands. These infractions are indications of systemic problems stemming from current or past installation practices.

We recommend that the City of Bellingham direct Comcast Communications to make the entire outside cable plant system, including without limitation all physical plant attachments; enclosures; drops; drop grounding; and structure installations, safe and code compliant with all applicable safety codes including the National Electrical Safety Code and the National Electric Code.

Comcast should be directed to develop a corrective action plan to address the plant and installation issues addressed in this report.

The City of Bellingham should consider the option of conducting periodic interim inspections of the work in progress to ensure compliance with legal requirements and to provide timely feedback to Comcast of discrepancies found.

Follow-up: The final Kramer.Firm report was received by the City in early July, and was provided to Comcast representatives a few weeks later. The report recommends that the City send notice to Comcast requesting response and a correction plan. City staff will pursue appropriate follow-up with Comcast related to the findings in the report.

Public Input Process and Results – May/June 2010

The City of Bellingham is committed to providing quality, responsive services, including using transparent processes and involving stakeholders in decisions. Numerous methods were used to engage area residents, key stakeholders and others in identifying cable-related community needs and interests in the Comcast franchise renewal.

Information about opportunities to provide input to the City was distributed via news releases, social media, on BTV10, and on the City web site. The distribution resulted in good coverage in the local news media.

Two public meetings were held. While the public meetings drew a limited number of participants, people who spoke were enthusiastic in their participation. The meetings aired on BTV10 the following week.

An informal, non-scientific survey was available online and was completed by 412 respondents. Residents provided additional information to the City via e-mail, letter, and telephone. City staff conducted outreach to and received input from local public education institutions.

Six themes were identified during the public input process:

Theme 1: Bellingham respondents view Comcast cable television service as too expensive; this represents an area of primary concern

Theme 2: Bellingham respondents' customer service experiences with Comcast are not positive, representing another area of primary concern.

Theme 3: Bellingham respondents desire more choice in programming, opportunities for ala cart channel selection, different channel groupings in subscription packages and additional choices of service providers.

Theme 4: Many Bellingham respondents wish to see local community programming and educational opportunities represented in their cable television service.

Theme 5: Most Bellingham respondents are largely satisfied with Comcast cable audio/visual quality and response to outages, though some report considerable difficulties with technical quality.

Theme 6: Many Bellingham respondents indicated that, overall, they are not satisfied with their Comcast cable television service.

City Input as Franchising Authority

While administering the franchise, City staff are in contact with Comcast and with the public and with other stakeholders related to Comcast services. Therefore, City staff have identified issues and have made recommendations related to the future franchise agreement.

City needs as franchising authority include the following: clearer reporting requirements, particularly following annexations, improved language and clarity regarding delivery of services to public and education institutions, and continuation of the special discount program, with administration by Comcast but with identification of some customers by City.

City staff have also identified needs for improved customer service provisions.

Public, Education, and Government "PEG" Access – Definitions

Although the Cable Act provides no definition for PEG channels, the cable industry and Franchising Authorities across the country have generally recognized the following definitions.

1. Public Access Channel – sometimes referred to as a "P" channel:

Local programming created by the wide variety of individuals, groups and organizations within a community. The channel is noncommercial and each producer typically has full editorial control. Public access channels, equipment and facilities are usually available for use on a first come, first served basis and the cable operator does not exert any editorial control except over unprotected speech.

2. Education Access Channel – sometimes referred to as an "E" channel:

Channels administered and programming created by staff, faculty and students of local education institutions. Programs usually center around the activities of public schools and colleges in the community, and may include fully-televised courses of instruction.

3. Government Access Channel – sometimes referred to as a “G” channel :

Channels administered and programming produced by local government staff and volunteers. Gavel-to-gavel coverage of public meetings is the mainstay of this category, but informative programs on such topics as fire safety, health and recreational opportunities provided by local government are also offered.

Note that franchising authority has the ability to designate the type of a channel. A single channel can be designated as one type of access channel or can be designated as a combination of access channel types.

Franchise Fees and PEG fees - Definitions

Franchise fee - includes any tax, fee, or assessment of any kind imposed by a franchising authority or other governmental entity on a cable operator or cable subscriber, or both, solely because of their status as such.

Capital Support/PEG fees- The City can mandate capital to support PEG access equipment and facilities but not for operational support (i.e. staff). Capital can take the form of an upfront grant, periodic grant, monthly per subscriber fee (e.g. \$0.05 - \$1.00 or a % of Gross Revenues).

Pass-through of costs = Operator can "pass-through" on subscriber monthly bills all franchise imposed costs including PEG costs.

BTV10 - Government and Education Access Needs and Interests

BTV10 is designated as a Government and Education Access channel, but is not a Public Access channel.

BTV10 is an important and well-recognized resource for Government and Education Access in Bellingham. The station is operated by the City, funded with 1.25% of the total 4.25% of franchise fees collected from Comcast. A recent scientific survey indicated 70% of City residents had heard of BTV10, with 19% of them watching at least once per week. The station films and airs 70-100 meetings per year, produces and airs 20-29 programs per year over 10 minutes in length, and airs a variety of government and education programming produced elsewhere.

Responses to our online survey related to Government and Education Access include:

- 60% rated community news, events and announcements as “high” interest. (See Chart 7 below)
- 42% rated government meetings as “high” interest
- 41% rated educational programs as “high” interest
- 32% rated area performing arts events as “high” interest

- 26% rated information about local non-profit organizations “high” interest
- 81% selected “community programming” as a “high” or “medium” importance as the City considers Comcast renewal

Recommendations in this report include a need to plan for an upgrade for channel 10 to a high definition channel, preservation of channel 10’s placement and identity, and the need to implement PEG fees to support capital equipment needs over the life of any renewed franchise.

Recommendations include provisioning of Internet services to a maximum of 5 city facilities and to schools. Internet services would be used to offset city operating expenses, provide redundancy in communications in event of an emergency, and provide services in targeted locations.

Public Access

The City received interest in increased community programming. Interest in public access came from a small but enthusiastic group of residents.

Responses to our online survey related to Public Access include:

- 60% rated community news, events and announcements as “high” interest
- 32% rated area performing arts events as “high” interest
- 26% rated information about local non-profit organizations “high” interest
- 81% selected “community programming” as a “high” or “medium” importance as the City considers Comcast renewal.

Survey open-ended remarks and other comments received by email, letter and telephone also supported Public Access interests in our community. Some open-ended remarks in the online survey reflected opposition to Public Access television.

The City received a proposal from Whatcom Community Television Communications, requesting a channel and funding for provision of Public Access television. Highlights of the proposal include the following:

- Requesting .75% of franchise fees as funding source
- Indicating that in year 3 of the start-up effort WCTC would request .75% from Whatcom County franchise fees as an additional source of revenue
- WCTC would provide a variety of programming
- Specifying proposed equipment and staffing needs

Recommendations in the report include channel provisioning and options for implementation of Public Access over the life of the future franchise period.

Education Access

BTV10 is currently a Government and Education Access station. BTV10 receives and airs some education programming from publicly funded education institutions. Programming received is described in the report.

Responses to our online survey related to Education Access include:

- 60% rated community news, events and announcements as “high” interest
- 41% rated educational programs as “high” interest
- 32% rated area performing arts events as “high” interest
- 21% rated school sporting events as “high” interest”

Interest from Universities

City received interest in a joint “E” channel to be operated by University of Washington (UW) and Western Washington University (WWU). UW already operates a channel and offers programming 24 hours per day. That channel is not available to Whatcom County Comcast subscribers. UW and WWU would collaborate to provide programming from both institutions on a shared channel.

UW did not request funding support. WWU requested ongoing financial support of \$118,100/year for staff, plus \$10,000/year for equipment replacement.

Bellingham School District Interest

The City also received input from Bellingham school district. Bellingham Schools identified three areas of need, including

- a) Priority 1- Improved language in the franchise agreement related to cable drops at school facilities.
- b) Priority 2- Bellingham Schools requested an “E” channel that would be programmed up to 5 hours per day, that could be used by other local education institutions.
- c) Priority 3- Bellingham Schools requested installation of Internet services at each school facility.

The report includes additional information about these requests, and letters of interest and support are included in report exhibits.

Recommendations are made in response to the needs of the public education institutions in Bellingham.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the needs assessment as summarized above, the City has identified eleven issues below, and related recommendations, as those of significant importance to a future franchise with Comcast.

The tables below provide summary of recommendations made throughout the report. The recommendations are presented in two table and grouped as follows:

- Table 1 – Recommendations made based on technical inspection of Comcast infrastructure and City experience as franchising authority and as Government & Education Access operator; and

- Table 2 – Recommendations made based on public and stakeholder input and review of current franchise agreement provisions

Table 1: Summary of Recommendations for next franchise – based on City inspection and City experience as franchise authority, government and education access operator

Recommendation Category	Recommendations and/or Options
1. Follow-up on Plant Inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City should communicate with Comcast and direct Comcast to develop a corrective action plan to address plant and installation issues identified in the report. • City staff will pursue notification to and follow-up with Comcast as a planned next step related to the plant inspection, including a follow-up inspection paid for by Comcast to ensure that compliance has been achieved.
2. Needs as Franchising Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed franchise agreement should clarify Comcast obligations following annexations, including timeframe to provide services to residents in newly-annexed areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New franchise should provide for reporting and timely update of subscriber addresses within annexation area. • Line extension criteria should be clear and should describe criteria for provision of services both within the City limits and following annexations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New franchise should describe clear line extension criteria, including clear description of installation cost responsibilities. • Proposed franchise agreement should clarify franchise language regarding services to public and education institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Service should be provided at no cost to all government buildings and schools within the franchise area, provided to the point of demarcation within each facility ○ Service should include all but premium channels, and include High Definition signals • Discount program for some low-income residents should continue. Comcast should take over responsibility of qualifying residents and providing customer service. City will refer City-qualified utility customers to Comcast. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Comcast should increase outreach efforts to lower-income residents. ○ In annual report prepared by Comcast, Comcast should provide statistics about participation rates. • Proposed agreement should eliminate the franchise provision related to joint PEG operations for the City and County, and allow policy makers from each entity to make determinations about PEG operations and channel distribution separately.
3. Needs as Government and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade BT10 to High Definition during franchise period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Comcast should be prepared to provide channel 10 in High Definition on a 2nd channel, or,

Recommendation Category	Recommendations and/or Options
Education Access Operator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If sufficient percentage of the subscribers are receiving signals in High Definition, move channel 10 to a High Definition channel. • The City should maintain the BTV10 identity in the community. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No change in channel 10 number or placement should occur without express notice and written approval by the City. • BTV10 channel identity and programming schedule information should be available in interactive programming guides. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Comcast should label channel 10 as BTV10 on any online or interactive programming guides. ○ Comcast should be required to provide tools for City to populate interactive programming guides with current programming schedule. • Enhance programming on BTV10 where possible <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ City staff should enhance outreach efforts to other publicly funded government and education institutions to increase programming levels of government and access programming. • City should maintain funding allocation level at 1.25% of franchise fees (outside of franchise agreement) to maintain current operations and replace existing station equipment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Funding for PEG operations should be established by policy makers and not be “set in stone” for the duration of the future franchise agreement • Proposed franchise agreement should authorize use of PEG fees to provide for more robust equipment replacement, including replacement of Council Chambers systems and conversion to High Definition equipment. To accommodate these and other equipment needs, provide for PEG fee rate up to a maximum \$.50/subscriber/month, with up to three one-time capital grants of \$150,000 each.
4. Provisioning of Internet Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To the extent legally permissible <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Add Internet services to a maximum of 5 city facilities, to be named by the City ○ Add Internet services to each school (need of Bellingham Schools)

Table 2: Summary of Recommendations for next franchise – based on public and stakeholder input, and based on review of current franchise provisions

Recommendation Category	Recommendations and/or Options
1. Subscriber Costs – Community Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City policy and code should continue to remain open to competitors, City should participate in programs that might provide for rate reduction due to competition. • City should improve communications to clarify and inform residents that franchise is not exclusive, per current City of Bellingham Municipal Code. • City elected officials should support initiatives that would might provide

Recommendation Category	Recommendations and/or Options
	<p>for more competition or provide cost containment opportunities to cable subscribers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ala cart programming options are a strong interest and need of this community. City negotiating team should stress the community's strong interest in "ala carte" programming and cost control interests. • Annual ascertainment survey performed by Comcast should identify subscriber programming preferences. Results should be included in annual report to the City. • The proposed franchise agreement should preserve a low-cost programming tier with an appropriate blend of programming. • Proposed franchise agreement should maintain the discount program, with Comcast providing point of contact and customer service responsibilities.
2. Customer Service Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FCC's customer service standards should be incorporated into the City's future franchise agreement as a baseline but should be enhanced to include reporting and other provisions as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Comcast should provide clearer reporting on hold time experiences for Bellingham customers. The hold-times reported by Bellingham customers does not reflect adequate customer service. ○ Comcast's phone system is cumbersome and should be adjusted to provide an easier way to reach a "real" person. A "Dial 0" option is recommended as an immediate option for getting callers to the right person. ○ The annual ascertainment survey conducted by Comcast should identify problems with sound or picture quality, in a manner that would provide Comcast with sufficient information to follow up and correct issues.
3. Local Office and local service information needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comcast should maintain a local service office in Bellingham • Comcast should include local service address and hours of operation on the bill. • City should ask Comcast to review the customer service sections of the bill currently being sent to Bellingham customers. Comcast should make changes so that customer service information can be interpreted simply and easily.
4. Maximize franchise fee rate at 5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City should incorporate a five percent (5%) franchise fee in the Proposed Franchise along with a Franchise Fee Payment Worksheet, which requires Comcast to document and submit its revenue sources to make sure the appropriate franchise fee is paid. • The proposed franchise agreement should remove reference to allocation of franchise fee revenues within the agreement. Any allocation of franchise fee revenues should be made by City Council action in the future.
5. Expanded Public,	<p>There is clear need and interest in expanding PEG Access over the life of the future franchise.</p>

Recommendation Category	Recommendations and/or Options
Education, and Government Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed franchise agreement should include provision for one E channel – to be implemented at time sufficient community readiness is determined by City Council Proposed franchise agreement should include provision for 2nd E channel – to be implemented at time sufficient community readiness is determined by City Council, and after first E channel has sufficient first-run programming Proposed franchise agreement should include provision for one P channel – to be implemented at time sufficient community readiness is determined by City Council Access channel operators should be provided with tools to populate any interactive programming guides, so that current programming is available for public access just as it is for other channels Channel number and placement for additional PEG channels should be logical and intuitive to subscribers. Changes to channel numbers and placement cannot occur without express notice and written approval by the City. Capital equipment needs are substantial and will increase depending on the number of PEG channels authorized in the future franchise period. Proposed franchise agreement should authorize use of PEG fees up to a maximum \$.50/subscriber/month based on these and other equipment needs, with up to three one-time capital grants of \$150,000 each. If PEG fees are shown on subscriber bill, show in one line only.
6. Maintain or improve important franchise provisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize existing franchise agreement as base document with revisions based on needs and changes in law Grant of authority - The City should strictly condition the grant of a non-exclusive franchise to Comcast for the purpose of erecting, constructing, operating, maintaining and repairing all necessary fixtures and facilities to operate a "cable system" providing "cable service" within the City. Operational reports - Incorporate into a franchise agreement language that allows the City to keep and maintain a current system map, review the performance of a cable operator during the term of the franchise, including methods to resolve noncompliance, review provisions, update the agreement. Transfer or assignment - A provision should be included within the Franchise to prevent the sale, assignment, or other transfer of the system in whole or in part to any other entity unless it is first approved by the City. Categories of programming - City should communicate to Comcast that these customer concerns should be taken into consideration when determining its programming line-up. Insurance requirements, indemnification, bonds, letters of credit, damages - Include provisions in the franchise that are designed to (a) ensure that the City, and the City's citizens, bears no risk as a result of a

Recommendation Category	Recommendations and/or Options
	Comcast's use of rights-of-way; and (b) ensure that Comcast complies with applicable requirements, and if it does not, the City can complete the required work and obtain compensation for the damages caused.
7. Franchise term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Length of next franchise term should be 10 years.

II. NEEDS ASSESSMENT STUDY

A. Overview of Needs Assessment Process

On or about February 16, 1996, the City of Bellingham ("City"), passed and adopted Ordinance No. 10709 awarding a cable television franchise ("Comcast Franchise") that is presently held by Comcast of Washington IV, Inc. ("Comcast"). Comcast currently serves approximately 27,000 cable subscribers in the City.

The Comcast Franchise was granted for a term of fifteen (15) years and will expire on or about February 16, 2011. Federal law at 47 U.S.C. § 546 requires that the franchise renewal process be initiated approximately three (3) years prior to that expiration date.

Comcast requested renewal of the Comcast Franchise on or about March 28, 2008 in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal laws. In response to the request, the City developed a project plan in 2009 and assigned staff resources to work on the effort in 2010. The City subsequently initiated processes to assess: 1) the past performance of Comcast under the Comcast Franchise; and 2) the City's future cable-related community needs and interests.

To determine its future cable-related needs, the City gathered information regarding customer service, current cable offerings, local community programming, technology and related issues.

The City's efforts regarding franchise renewal have been coordinated by Ms. Marty Mulholland, Director of Information Technology Service Department, Ms. Joan E Hoisington, City attorney, Ms. Janice Keller, Communications Manager, Mr. Dal Neitzel, BTV10 Station Manager and Mr. Brian Grogan of the law firm of Moss & Barnett, the City's outside legal advisor regarding franchise renewal. These City representatives, together with input and advice from the Mayor, City Council and Mr. Grogan, determined to undertake a comprehensive needs assessment process.

This Informal Needs Assessment Report outlines the process and findings of the City's needs assessment. Based on the findings of the City's needs assessment, a series of cable-related community needs and interests have been identified.

After reviewing this report with City Elected Officials, the City project team will prepare franchise documentation in the form of a Cable Television Franchise Ordinance ("Proposed Franchise") which will incorporate appropriate language to address all of the City's identified needs and interests. In particular, the Proposed Franchise will address certain issues which the City has carefully reviewed to ensure they comply with all applicable federal, state, and local requirements and which the City has determined must be included in any renewed franchise ultimately granted to Comcast.

B. Inspection of Comcast Physical Plant

1. Physical Plant Inspection of existing Comcast facilities - Review Process

Kramer. Firm Inc. was engaged to provide a technical inspection of the existing Comcast facilities. That review was to include the following:

- Physical Plant inspection of subscriber network, representing all major portions of the City, including single family, multiple family and commercial areas. Review for compliance with National Electrical Code and National Electrical Safety Code
- Drive-out of 20%-25% of total plant trunk mileage.
- Presentation of findings in a report to be delivered to City, supported by representative photographs.

Kramer.Firm Inc. has significant expertise and experience in this field, and provided statements of qualifications and experience as part of their report. Kramer.Firm Inc. indicates they have served over 500 local government or local government groups since 1984.

Representatives of Kramer Firm Inc. conducted the inspection from May 24-26, 2010. Comcast's Technical Operations Manager, Mr. Lance Ryon, observed the inspection process. City BTV10 Station manager participated in the inspection on the first day, May 24, 2010.

2. Physical Plant Inspection of existing Comcast facilities - Review Results

Following is an excerpt from the Kramer.Firm Executive Summary report:

Introduction

At the direction of the City of Bellingham, Kramer.Firm, Inc. conducted an outside plant safety compliance inspection of Comcast Cable. The inspection was conducted from May 24, 2010 through May 26, 2010.

The purpose of this inspection was to gauge Comcast's level of compliance with the National Electrical Safety Code, governing outside plant construction (i.e., pole-to-pole, and underground systems), and the National Electrical Code, governing construction and installation safety issues at homes and businesses attached to Comcast's system.

Summary of Findings

Based on our inspection of hundreds of thousands of miles of cable plant in over 500 communities around the United States over the past twenty-six years we find that the Comcast system in City of Bellingham, Washington to be ABOVE average.

We found relatively few outside distribution plant infractions, indicating a system that is well built and for the most part, properly maintained. Power supplies and distribution plant were properly bonded to the electrical network as required. Although some infractions were observed, cable sag control and grounding installation and maintenance in the Comcast system were generally superior to other comparable systems we have inspected.

While the distribution plant was generally well maintained, we found numerous subscriber installation infractions. Specifically, Comcast's use

of power masts as a point of connection for their coaxial cables is of serious concern. The number of installations affected by these problems is significant and may range in the thousands. These infractions are indications of systemic problems stemming from current or past installation practices.

The list of infractions noted as Attachment A1 of our inspection report tendered to the City should not be construed as complete or representing an audit of 100 percent of the system. Rather, it is a sample, and our judgments are based on nearly twenty six years of plant inspections in hundreds of communities around the country, including other Comcast systems.

We recommend that the City of Bellingham direct Comcast Communications to make the entire outside cable plant system, including without limitation all physical plant attachments; enclosures; drops; drop grounding; and structure installations, safe and code compliant with all applicable safety codes including the National Electrical Safety Code and the National Electric Code.

Comcast should be directed to develop a corrective action plan to address the plant and installation issues addressed in this report. We estimate that this corrective action plan should take no longer than 30 days to develop and deliver to the City for its comments or approval. We do not believe that the corrective actions required to bring Comcast's system into compliance in both outside plant and installation practices can be accomplished in the normal course of work, nor over a reasonable time without the assistance of additional outside contract help. We estimate that with a proper workforce, and an accurate audit of the plant, the violations noted in this sampling of the plant as well as the remainder of the system can be corrected in 12-18 months.

The City of Bellingham should consider the option of conducting periodic interim inspections of the work in progress to ensure compliance with legal requirements and to provide timely feedback to Comcast of discrepancies found.

As a preventive measure and to insure a continued high level of compliance, Comcast should conduct additional technical training for its field force on the requirements of the National Electrical Safety Code and the National Electric Code. Without adequate training and management oversight to insure code compliance, any effort to correct the existing deficiencies will be of limited value, as new infractions will be taking place at the same time that old infractions are being corrected.

As an illustration of the use of power mast as a point of connection is provided below, and is taken from the Kramer.Firm report:



3235 Firwood Street. Cable drop attached to the power mast above the roof. Cables run over the roof of the building.

From Kramer.Firm's report:

Comcast installers frequently make use of the electrical utility power riser above the roof for making cable drop attachments... The National Electrical Code prohibits the attachment of any cable drops to an above-the-roof mast containing electrical conductors. Comcast's practice often violates the required separation from the power drop and places installation personnel in a dangerous position as they try to work in close proximity to the power conductors.

The Executive Summary of the Physical Plant Inspection was provided to the City on July 5, 2010 and is attached as Exhibit G.

Recommendations:

- Kramer.Firm recommends that the City communicate with Comcast and direct Comcast to develop a corrective action plan to address plant and installation issues identified in the report.
- City staff will pursue notification to and follow-up with Comcast as a planned next step related to the plant inspection.

- Following a reasonable correction period, the City should require that Kramer.Firm be retained to perform a follow-up inspection take place. The follow-up inspection should be paid for by Comcast.

C. Public Input Process and Results

1. Importance of Public Input to Cable Franchise Renewal

The City of Bellingham is committed to providing quality, responsive services, including using transparent processes and involving stakeholders in decisions. Numerous methods were used to engage area residents, key stakeholders and others in identifying cable-related community needs and interests for the Comcast cable franchise renewal.

2. Public Communications and Outreach

The City used various communications tools to help people understand the cable franchise renewal process and issues and seek their needs and opinions. City outreach efforts focused on encouraging people to take an online survey, participate in public meetings or simply call, write or email comments to City staff.

City website

The City provided easy-to-find information, offered ways to provide feedback and maintained project visibility by keeping a cable franchise renewal article on the City's main home page for one month. (This page will remain easily accessible on the City website for the duration of the renewal process, with regular updates as steps are taken to achieve renewal.) This page and its companion news release webpage received a total of 1,019 unique visitors during the month they were posted on the City homepage. All other outreach methods encouraged people to go to the City website for information and to provide feedback.

News Releases and Social Media

News releases were distributed at the beginning of the public outreach period to a list of nearly 400 people, including all local news media representatives, members of City boards and commissions and neighborhood leaders. News releases also were posted on the City's Twitter site, where 375 people are followers and re-tweeters.

This distribution resulted in good coverage in the local news media, including a front page, above-the-fold article in the May 20, 2010 Bellingham Herald, Herald blog posts and repeated stories on the local radio stations.

BTV10

Announcements about the public input process were aired on BTV10 regularly during the outreach period, encouraging viewers to go to the City website to learn more and provide feedback.

Targeted outreach

The City sent emails to key stakeholders, including video and other technology professionals, senior citizen advocacy organizations, people who have contacted City government about cable-television-related services in the past, and others. Staff also are aware of some promotions initiated outside City government, including Facebook re-posts of City information, an independent Facebook page, an email petition advocating for increased PEG services, and an independently organized community meeting.

3. Web Site Survey Results

An informal , non-scientific online survey served as a central collection point for feedback about cable-related interests and Comcast services. The survey was available on the City website May 11 through June 4, 2010. In the survey, respondents were provided with 22 multiple choice questions and four places to provide unlimited-length comments. Survey responses were collected anonymously. The survey tool was set up to allow it to only be taken once per computer station.

The renewal process is for the City of Bellingham franchise agreement with Comcast. Data and analysis reported below reflects the responses of only those people who said they live within Bellingham City limits.

The survey questions, results from all survey respondents (within and outside Bellingham) and complete text of comments received are available in Exhibit A.

a) Survey response demographics

- 320 people who live in Bellingham responded. (Another 92 people who live outside Bellingham responded, for a total of 412 responses.)
- 79% of Bellingham respondents live in single-family homes.
- 82% of Bellingham respondents currently subscribe to Comcast cable television service.
- Bellingham participants were fairly evenly spread among adult age groups:
 - 18-25 (8%)
 - 26-35 (21%)
 - 36-50 (27%)
 - 50-62 (23%)
 - 62 and above (22%)

b) Major themes found in survey responses from Bellingham residents

THEME 1: Bellingham respondents view Comcast cable television service as too expensive; this represents an area of primary concern.

- When asked about the price of cable service, 91% of Bellingham respondents indicated Comcast cable television service is “too expensive.” (See Chart 1 below)
- Of those who have subscribed in the past but no longer have Comcast cable television service, most (76%) indicated cost was a factor in choosing to end their cable television service. Cost was a factor for 38% of those who never have subscribed.
- 74% said they feel it is “very important” to have the basic or “limited” cable plan, offering fewer channels at a lower cost.
- 77% said they feel special discounts for basic cable television services should be made available to low-income senior citizens and low-income people with disabilities. (See Chart 2 below)
- More than 80 remarks in the open-ended comments section of the survey describe further Bellingham respondents’ concerns about the price of Comcast services in our community, their interest in lower cost packages and discounts and other cost-related comments. These comments can be viewed in their entirety in Exhibit A.

Chart 1: Web survey - Price of Comcast cable television services – Bellingham respondents

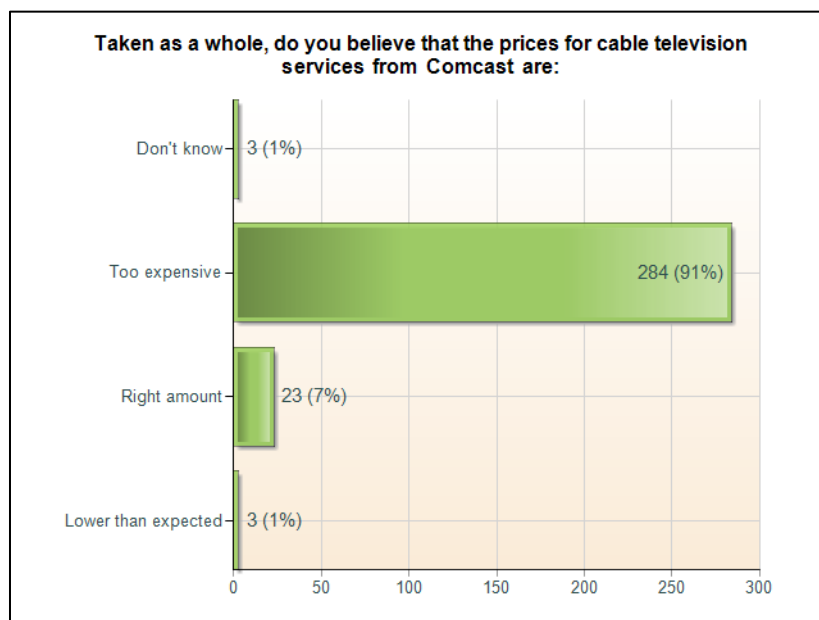


Chart 2: Web survey - Special discounts – Bellingham respondents



THEME 2: Bellingham respondents' customer service experiences with Comcast are not positive, representing another area of primary concern.

- 97% of Bellingham respondents selected “customer service” as “high” or “medium” importance as the City considers Comcast renewal.
- Hold times are much longer than most Bellingham respondents view as acceptable (See Charts 3 and 4 below).
- 19% of Bellingham respondents reported estimated hold times of more than 10 minutes. (See Chart 3 below)
- Large numbers of Bellingham respondents are unsatisfied with the ability to use the phone tree to reach the correct representative (45%), hold times (49%), ability of representatives to answer questions/resolve issues (34%) and promptness of service technicians in keeping scheduled appointments (26%). (See Charts 3, 4, and 5 below)
- Maintaining a Bellingham office is important to Bellingham respondents (See Chart 6 below):
 - 62% have visited the existing office during the past year;
 - 72% indicated it is “very important” or “important” to operate a full-service office in Bellingham.
 - Many visit the office when their attempts to resolve issues by telephone are unsuccessful.
- Many Bellingham respondents used open-ended comment opportunities to describe further their concerns about their customer service experiences. These comments can be viewed in their entirety and are included in Exhibit A.

- Respondents reporting hold times of longer than 10 minutes were asked to estimate the hold times they experienced. These responses can be reviewed in Exhibit A.

Chart 3: Web Survey - Hold time experiences – Bellingham respondents

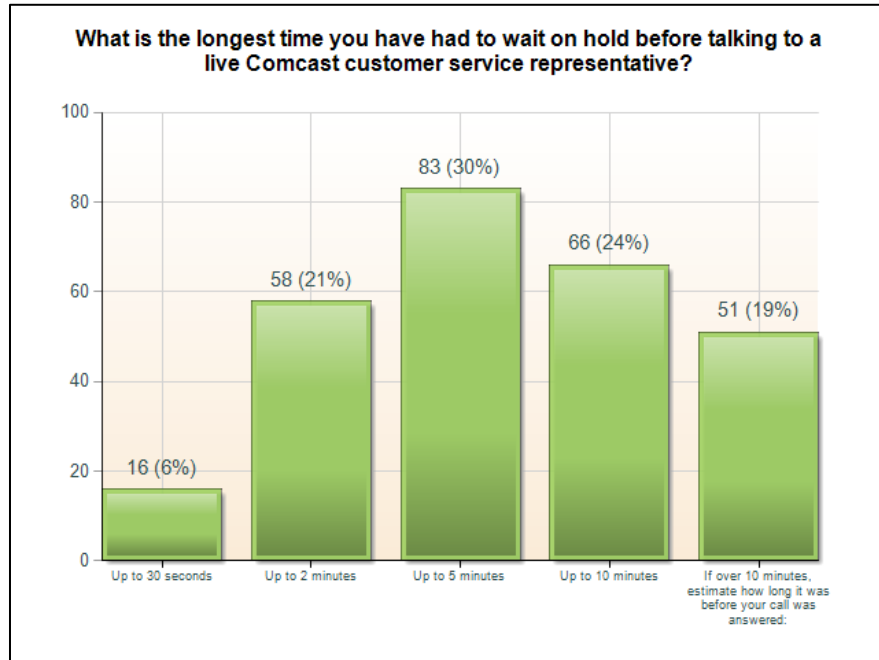


Chart 4: Web Survey - Longest acceptable hold times – Bellingham respondents

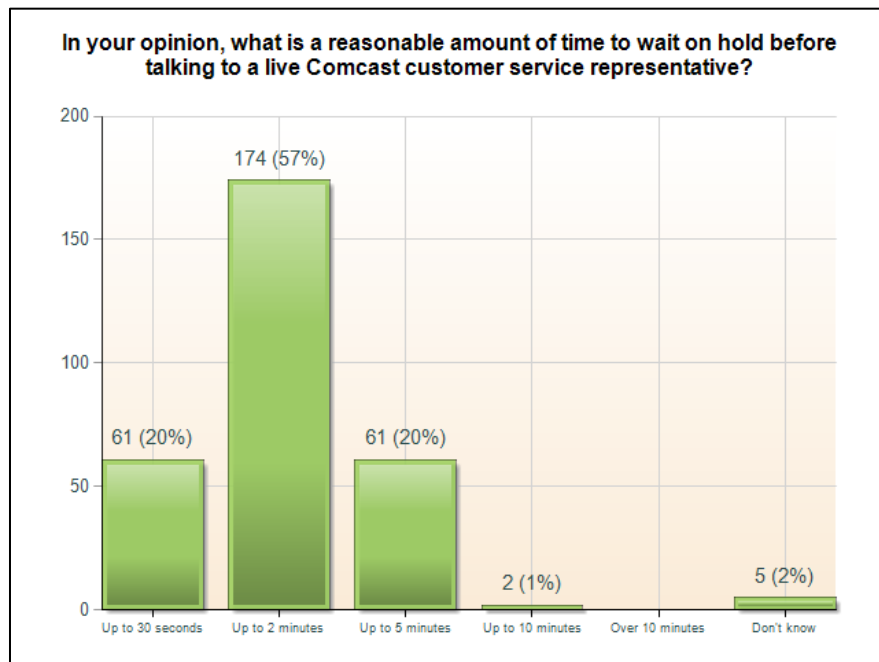


Chart 5: Web Survey - Satisfaction with customer service features– Bellingham respondents

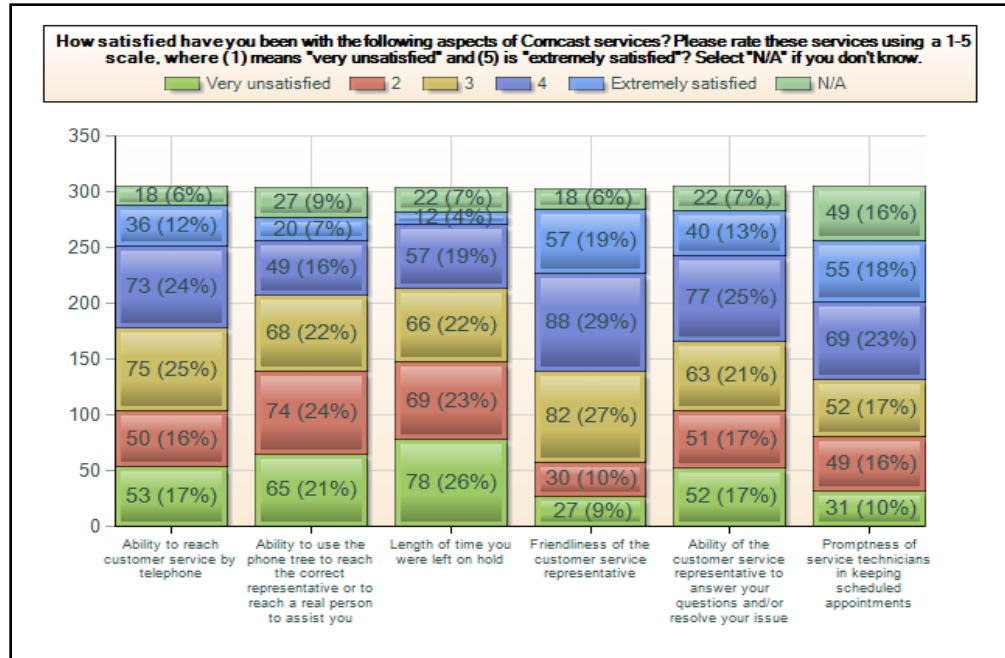
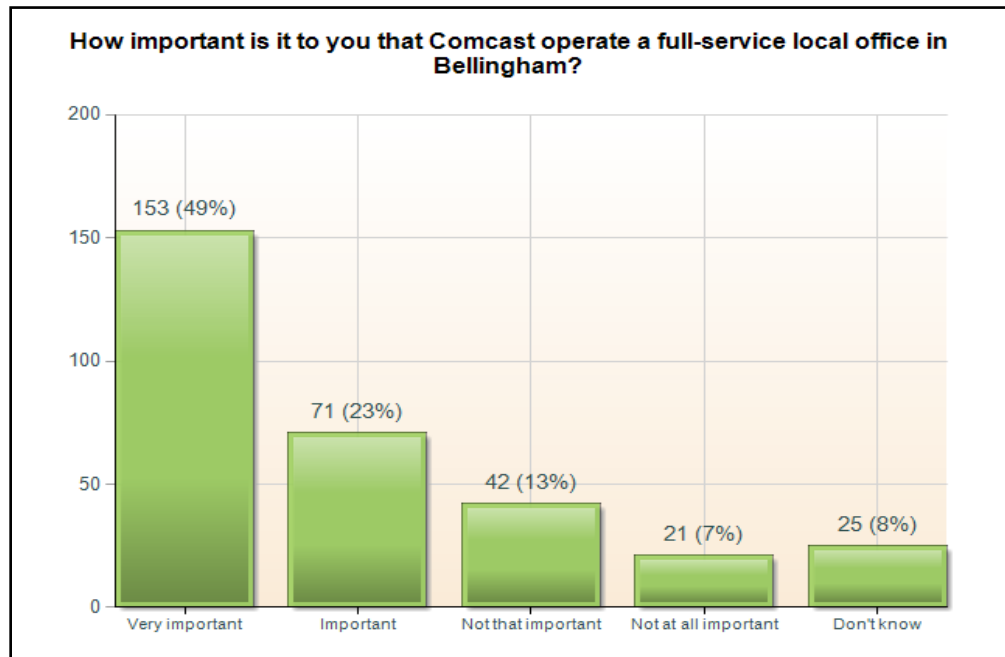


Chart 6: Web Survey - Importance of Local office – Bellingham respondents



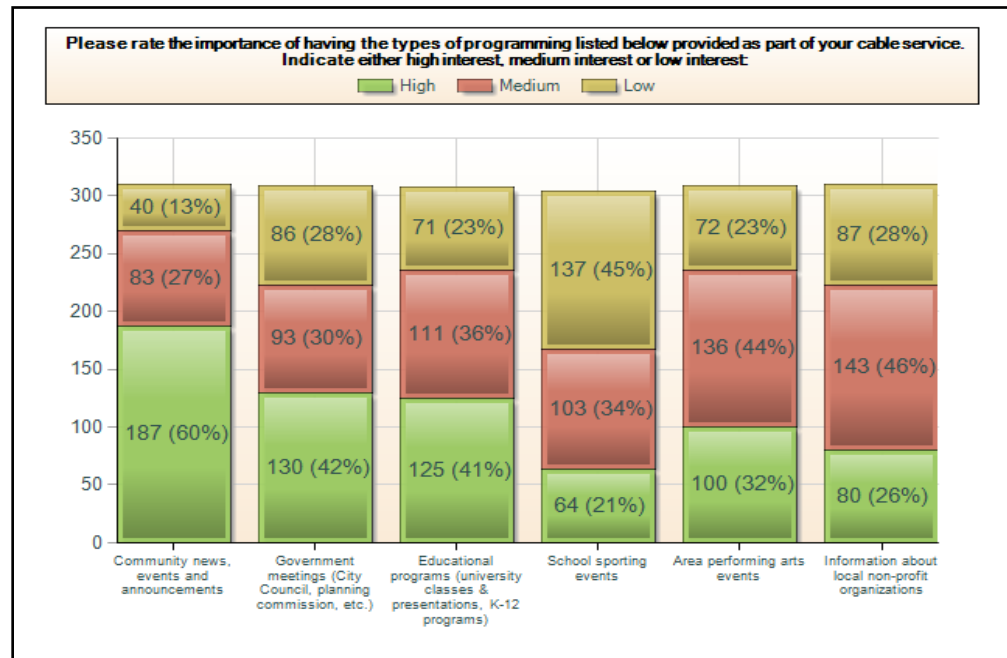
THEME 3: Bellingham respondents desire more choice in programming, opportunities for an ala carte channel selection and pricing options, different channel groupings in subscription packages and additional choices of service providers.

- Many open-ended comments expressed desire for more choice in programming, opportunities for ala carte channel selection and pricing options, different channel groupings in subscription packages. Many comments also requested additional choices of service providers and/or need for additional competition in cable television services. These comments can be viewed in their entirety in Exhibit A.
- 32% of those Bellingham respondents who subscribed in the past but do not currently have Comcast cable indicated “don’t like the channels” as one reason they stopped their Comcast service.
- 46% of those Bellingham respondents who have never subscribed to Comcast cable service indicated it is because of “lack of choice of cable companies.”
- 92% of Bellingham respondents selected “programming variety” as a “high” or “medium” importance as the City considers Comcast renewal.

THEME 4: Many Bellingham respondents wish to see local community programming and educational opportunities represented in their cable television service.

- 60% rated community news, events and announcements as “high” interest. (See Chart 7 below)
- 42% rated government meetings as “high” interest. (See Chart 7 below)
- 41% rated educational programs as “high” interest. (See Chart 7 below)
- 32% rated area performing arts events as “high” interest. (See Chart 7 below)
- 26% rated information about local non-profit organizations “high” interest. (See Chart 7 below)
- 21% rated school sporting events as “high” interest.” (See Chart 7 below)
- 81% selected “community programming” as a “high” or “medium” importance as the City considers Comcast renewal. (See Chart 7 below)
- 30 comments were received in open-ended questions related to interests in local community programming.
- Full text of responses to open-ended questions is included in Exhibit A.

Chart 7: Web Survey - Programming interests – Bellingham respondents



THEME 5: Most Bellingham respondents are largely satisfied with Comcast cable audio/visual quality and response to outages, though some report considerable difficulties with technical quality.

- 62% of Bellingham respondents indicate satisfaction with picture quality, 54% indicate satisfaction with sound quality. (See Chart 8 below)
- 17% (55 of 320 total) of Bellingham respondents described problems with technical quality on individual or multiple channels. Responses to questions about specific channels with poor picture quality or other reception problems are included in Exhibit A.
- 35% describe the length of time it took Comcast to restore service outages as “extremely” or “very” responsive. (See Chart 9 below)
- 96% indicated that “signal quality” is of “high” or “medium” importance as the City considers Comcast franchise renewal.

Chart 8: Web Survey – Rating quality of cable television service features – Bellingham respondents

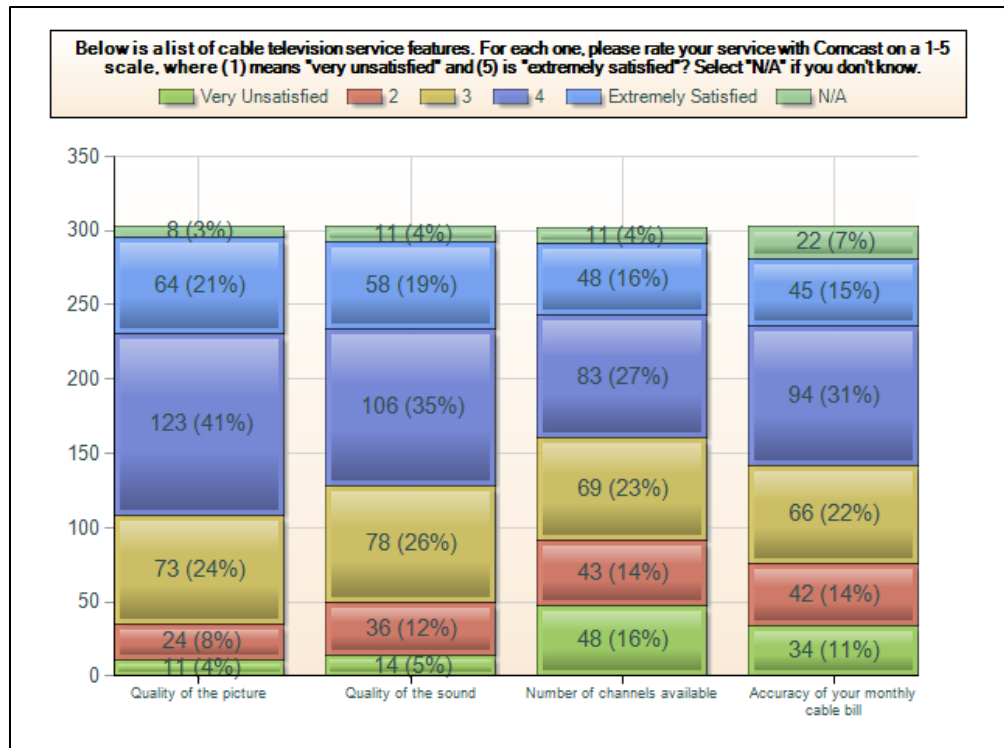
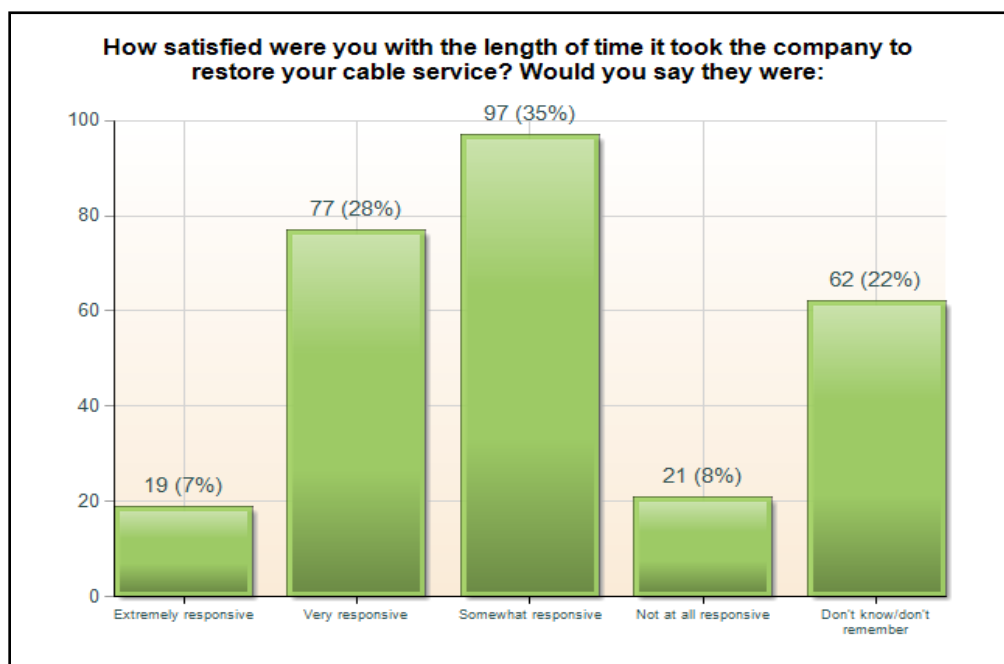


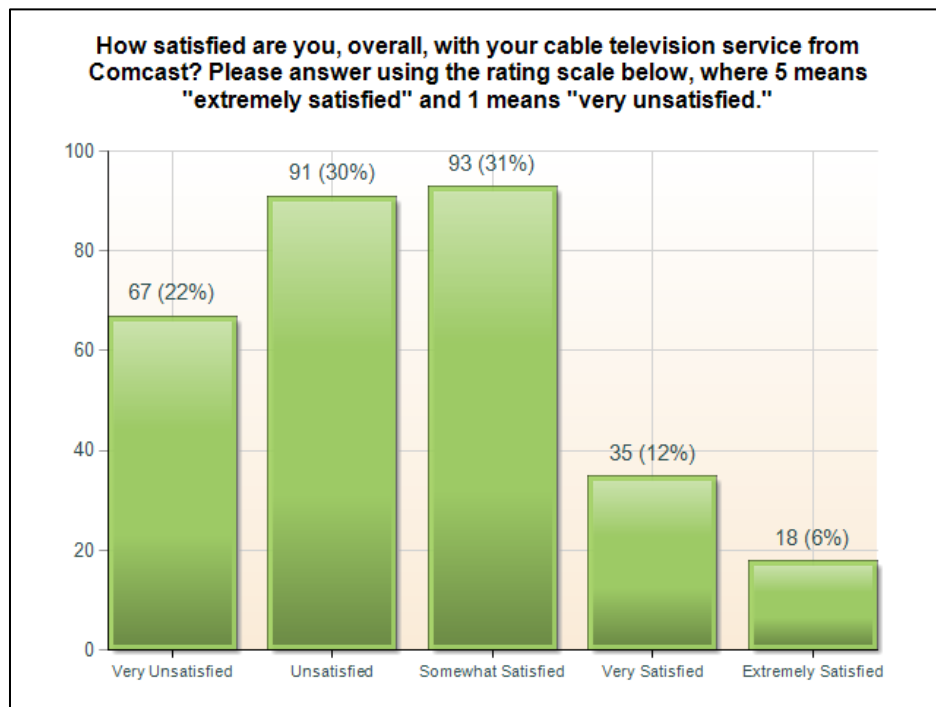
Chart 9: Web Survey - Satisfaction with service restoration after outage– Bellingham respondents



THEME 6: Many Bellingham respondents indicated that, overall, they are not satisfied with their Comcast cable television service.

- 52% (22%+30%) choose “very unsatisfied” or “unsatisfied” to describe their satisfaction with Comcast cable television service. (See Chart 10 below)
- The majority of open-ended comments described dissatisfaction with price, customer service, channel, programming and package choices , and expressed desire for additional choices of service providers in our area.

Chart 10: Web Survey - Overall satisfaction – Bellingham respondents



c) Consistency in survey responses from within and outside City limits

The franchise renewal process currently underway is directed toward the Comcast services provided within Bellingham city limits. Many residents outside City limits chose to participate in the City’s online survey. The survey data and analysis presented above reflects only those respondents who live within the City of Bellingham.

Review of all responses indicate the themes described above are consistent among those who live within and outside City limits, with only a few exceptions:

- County residents who responded are less satisfied with sound quality than City residents.

- About 10% (10 out of 92) of respondents who live outside City limits also noted in the open-ended comments that Comcast service is not available in their area.

Survey results documents for City resident respondents only are included in Exhibit A. Survey result documents for all respondents will be made available at the City's web site at <http://www.cob.org>.

4. Public input meetings and results

The City conducted two public meetings, held May 25 and 26, 2010. One meeting was scheduled for daytime; the other was held in the early evening. Each meeting aired on BTV10 five times during the week following the meeting; statements and visuals presented during the meetings encouraged BTV10 viewers to visit the City website and provide feedback.

While the public meetings drew a limited number of participants, people who spoke were enthusiastic in their participation and offered comments that were similar to and supported the themes found in the survey responses. Meeting participants specifically mentioned need for public access and community programming, concerns about pricing, customer service and technical support, interest in more assertive franchise oversight and revenue audits, and need for increased franchise fee collection by the City.

Exhibit B provides summary transcripts of the two meetings.

5. Other Input Received from Citizens and Organizations

The City invited and received numerous contacts and comments outside of the online survey and public meetings.

These communications were similar to and supported the themes found in the survey responses. People submitting or calling with comments specifically mentioned their concerns about Comcast pricing, customer service and technical support, need for public access and community programming in Bellingham, interest in more flexible programming options and desire for cable lines to be undergrounded when possible.

Exhibit C provides complete text of information received via telephone calls, emails and letters.

6. Public Access - Proposal from Whatcom Community Television and Communications

On June 8, 2010 the City received a proposal from Whatcom Community Television and Communications (WCTC) to create what the WCTC Executive Director Dennis Lane describes as a "public community video broadcast platform." According to the WCTC proposal, video content would come from community, educational and some outside sources. The proposal indicates that 56 hours per month of public and educational

videos would be offered initially, with more complete implementation over a five-year period.

Budget and Funding

The WCTC proposal states it would require funding from an increase in the City of Bellingham franchise fee, .75% of franchise fee revenues, estimated at \$120,000 per year.

In the third year, the Whatcom County government would also be asked for .75% of franchise fee revenues funding from the Whatcom County Cable Franchise fee. The WCTC proposal provides budget estimates for space, equipment and staff.

The complete WCTC proposal is included in Exhibit D.

7. Input from Public Educational Organizations

City staff engaged in productive conversations with colleagues at Western Washington University and Bellingham Public Schools about the cable-related needs of those organizations.

a) UW/WWU partnership interest in “E” Channel

In Spring 2010, the City received contacts from both University of Washington (UW) and Western Washington University (WWU) representatives expressing interest in potential Education channel expansion and offerings in Bellingham.

Note that the University of Washington channel, UWTV, which currently provides programming 24 hours per day, is not presently available to Comcast subscribers in Bellingham.

Representatives from UWTV began discussions with WWU about a potential shared “E” channel.

Written Communications from WWU:

The City received a letter from WWU on May 20, 2010 (Included in Exhibit E) indicating the following:

- Confirming that WWU and UWTV are proposing to collaborate to deliver an education channel featuring content from both institutions
- Request for a channel dedicated to this purpose
- Western committed to sharing research, scholarship, artistic and athletic endeavors of faculty and students with the larger community

As a follow-up to this letter, WWU provided additional information about the proposed joint operation – letter received on June 29, 2010 (also included in Exhibit

E), providing additional information about the proposed partnership and making key comments about financial commitments and requests as follows:

- WWU is prepared to authorize the use of more than \$163,000 in one-time university funds to purchase high quality production equipment
- WWU faces a challenge in funding for production staff. Requesting \$118,100 annually from cable contract revenue for the following:
 - \$65,000 – Video Production Assistance 1.0 FTE
 - \$43,000 – Production Producer .5 FTE
 - \$10,000 – Annual equipment replacement

Written Communications from UW:

The City received a letter from Regent Craig Cole, of the University of Washington Board of Regents on June 15, 2010 (Included in Exhibit E) indicating the following:

- Writing at urging of WWU and as citizen of Bellingham
- Serves on board of regents of UW and also proud alumnus of WWU
- Express support for partnership proposal for new educational television channel
- UWTV has provided great service to communities for more than 10 years
- UWTV provides programming across a variety of disciplines and interests, including information for personal enrichment and development, continuing professional development for a number of professionals, medical programs aimed at a general audience. New programming planned will include business leadership and news programming. UWTV includes sports programming and will expand in the fall with additional sports programming.
- Expresses wholehearted endorsement of unique partnership proposed, and request to include a new channel on Comcast's offering to local cable subscribers

The City received a letter from Mr. Randy Hodgins, Vice President – University of Washington Office of External Affairs on June 16, 2010 (Included in Exhibit E), indicating the following:

- University of Washington is pleased to join with Western Washington University to request the addition of an Educational channel to Bellingham's cable television services
- Looks forward to opportunity to share UW programming with greater Bellingham community, which includes several thousand UW alumni as well as many current UW students and parents
- Pleased with opportunity to work cooperatively with WWU in support of their efforts to expand television services and communications

- Proposed shared channel would be programmed 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. UWTV has been in operation for more than 10 years, and is ready and able to provide full-time programming at any time, and then will work with colleagues at WWU to incorporate their programming on a time frame that works best for WWU
- Expresses willingness to incorporate programming from other educational institutions in the Bellingham region into the new channel. WWU is likely to be the central clearinghouse and distribution point for local Bellingham programming.

Written communications received from Public Education Institutions are included in Exhibit E, including the letters described above.

b) Bellingham School District Interests in cable services, “E” Channel, and Internet access

City staff members met with Bellingham School District representatives on May 24, 2010, to discuss School District needs and interests. The School District provided a follow-up letter on June 28, 2010, expressing their needs for the future franchise agreement. The letter is included in Exhibit E.

Bellingham School District interests, presented in priority order, are as follows:

- Priority 1 – Cable television services. High quality digital television signals should be provided to each and every current and future school in the district, as well as to the central office. The school district requests delivery of all channels with exception of premium channels, delivered to the point of demarcation within each current and future building.
 - Note that currently the school district facilities receive the channels requested as part of the existing franchise agreement, but would also like to ensure that High Definition versions of those channels are delivered for the duration of the next franchise period.
 - Note that the school district request describes the need for a cable drop to the point of demarcation within each current and future building, not just to the school property. This request clarifies the school district need related to physical delivery of cable signals to school buildings.
- Priority 2 – E channel – Each of the district’s high schools already have equipment and software for video production and broadcast within the building. The capability is expanding rapidly to middle and elementary schools. The district requests that a channel be reserved free of charge for delivery of school originated content to the community. Broadcasts would be distributed to Comcast via the district central office. A broad variety of content is described, including school announcements, sports events, social activities, academic competitions, entertainment produced by students, culminating

projects presented by seniors, lectures, school board meetings, and emergency notifications. Estimated quantity of programming is three to five hours per day when school is in session.

- Priority 3 – I-Net service – each building be provided a Comcast high speed broadband connection to the Internet. This would be used as an alternative means of connecting to the Internet in the event that there is a failure in the districts own wide area network, or in the event that the K-20 network is inoperable.

Communications related to Public Education Institutions are included in Exhibit E, including the written letters received from the public education institutions and described above.

D. City experience as franchising authority

1. Overview

The City of Bellingham is committed to providing quality, responsive services, including using transparent processes. As the City is the franchising authority, staff from a number of City departments come into contact with Bellingham residents or stakeholders relating to the Comcast franchise agreement and services. Statistics on the types of inquiries are not kept.

Overall the City does not receive a significant number of inquiries relating to Comcast services. Comcast appears to provide good follow-up and resolution when City staff refer specific customer issues or complaints back to the company.

The information below summarizes the types of contacts the City receives and issues the City is called upon to manage as franchise authority.

2. Resolving questions and concerns received from public

Bellingham citizens contact City staff when they have specific questions or concerns related to Comcast. While the staff does not track or log all inquiries, these are the types of contacts received:

- **Audio/video out of synch, either on BTV10 or on other channels** –The most common Comcast complaint that we receive at the TV station is from viewers who are watching Comcast and the audio and video are out of sync.
 - Sometimes the complaint is about channel 10.
 - Other times it is about other channels in addition to channel 10. When technical staff check the BTV10 output and return signal from Comcast we have not been able to confirm the problem.
 - It appears as if this problem may appear in one location in the City but not throughout the City.

- **Questions about distribution of digital boxes** – There was a great deal of confusion and requests for help at the time that Comcast switched over to digital boxes.
 - This switch occurred at the same time that TV stations were also required to switch from analog to digital transmission and one of Comcast’s marketing campaigns at the time stated that if you were a Comcast subscriber you would not have to worry about losing broadcast stations.
 - At the same time Comcast was delivering digital boxes that were not simple for everyone to install. The result was an increase in equipment installation related calls to BTV10 and also an increase in complaints about having to install the digital boxes in the first place.
- **Customer complaints** – Comcast customers call the City to express concerns with Comcast prices and services.
 - Comcast costs – Citizens call to express complaints about Comcast costs. This is one of the most common complaints received by City staff.
 - Customer service complaints – These vary in type and nature. City staff take in customer information and refer the calls to Comcast for response. In general, Comcast has done a good job in responding to and resolving these issues.

3. Expansion of City franchise area – likely in upcoming franchise term

Section 4.2 of the current franchise states that Comcast “shall provide access to equal and uniform cable service throughout the franchise area”.

The City is surrounded by a large urban growth area, some of which could be annexed into the City during the upcoming term of the franchise.

Recommendation: City staff recommend that the future agreement contain the language from section 4.2 above, obliging Comcast to provide equal and uniform cable access throughout the City’s franchise area, and also provide for the following items based on community needs:

- The line extension criteria needs to be clearer, both for areas within City limits and following any City annexations. Cost responsibilities and criteria for extending cable services needs to be clearer.
- Timing for Comcast to provide services to previously unserved areas following an annexation should be determined based on city’s sole discretion based on proposal from operator to meet access requirements uniformly throughout the community. Comcast shall provide proposal for delivering services within 90 days following an annexation.
- Written Notice to the City within 90 days following an annexation, indicating that subscribers located within the newly annexed area have been identified

and have been coded correctly as residents of the Bellingham franchise area rather than the Whatcom County franchise area

4. Overseeing provision of cable service to public institutions

Current franchise language (Section 4.1 of the City’s Franchise Agreement) states that one outlet of basic services be provided to some specific public facilities. The agreement further states that “one outlet containing all signals, excluding premium channels, to all public educational buildings and facilities and all government buildings and facilities that are passed by the cable system. TCI shall not be required to provide an outlet to such buildings unless it is technically feasible.”

Under the current Comcast Franchise, Comcast provides free cable drops and service to an estimated 24 government buildings and 39 schools in the Bellingham area.

As City staff have attempted to implement Section 4.1 of the agreement, the language has proven vague. For example, in at least one instance, a new school building was constructed on the same site as an existing school. Although the school district installed and paid for conduit to provision the school for the cable outlets, Comcast charged the school to construct the installation. City staff asserted that the school should not have to pay for the installation, but the language in the agreement was insufficiently clear to make installation expense responsibilities known.

Provision of outlets of services could be clearer for delivery to both education and government institutions within the City limits.

Recommendation: City staff recommend that that language related to the provision of cable services be simplified to provide clarity over the term of the next franchise.

Services should be provided to the point of demarcation for all existing and future public education buildings and facilities and all government buildings and facilities within Bellingham City limits. Services should include all channels, including high definition channels, but excluding premium channels, and be at no cost to the institution.

5. Administering discounts for some low-income residents

Comcast agreed to provide discounts to some citizens in 2003, at the request of the City.

The City of Bellingham Finance Department administers a program to provide discounts to its utility customers. Reduced rates are available for water, sewer and storm water utilities provided by the City of Bellingham. The City has approximately 450 discounted utility accounts.

The following table provides the age and income requirements to qualify for utility discounts, as of June 2010:

Table 3: Qualifications for Utility Discounts as of June 2010, if you live in a residence receiving a separate utility bill

Age	Total household annual income
Senior Citizens age 62 and older	\$27,510 or less from all sources
Disabled citizens age 18 and older who receive permanent social security disability payments	\$27,510 or less from all sources

When the Comcast discount program was initiated, the City accepted responsibility for notifying Comcast of qualified utility customers who wish to receive a Comcast discount. Comcast provides a 30% discount on its limited basic cable package.

The City also agreed to qualify Bellingham non-utility customers to facilitate Comcast discounts.

This connection between discounts for City utilities and discounts for Comcast services presents several challenges:

- The transfer of information between the City Finance Department and Comcast often results in confusion between the customer, the City, and Comcast. Customer service is reduced in the eyes of the customer.
- The administration of this program as currently configured is particularly cumbersome when applied to Bellingham residents who are not utility customers. Many people who are eligible for discounts are not direct utility customers. For example, they live in multi-family homes, care facilities or are the dependents of other individuals. So they too lose an important financial benefit or rely on the City staff to provide paperwork and telephone assistance for services that are entirely unrelated to City business.

Recommendation: For more consistent administration in the future, the following is recommended:

- The City will provide a listing of newly qualified discounted accounts to Comcast on a monthly basis
- The City will provide a listing of all qualified discounted accounts to Comcast on an annual basis
- Comcast will provide customer service related to this program. City staff will refer interested customers to Comcast.
- Comcast will qualify all customers who do not meet the City's criteria for a City utility discount.

- Annual report: Comcast should provide information to the City in each year's annually report, indicating a) the qualifications to enroll in Comcast's program, which may or may not be identical to the City's qualifications over time, but they should be substantially similar, and b) the number of Bellingham residents receiving discounts

6. Public, Education, Government Access – Relationship with Whatcom County Franchise

Section 12.9 of the current franchise agreement states that the PEG channel facilities and operation will be under the auspices of both the City and Whatcom County.

In future Comcast contracts, the City should not be bound to Whatcom County regarding PEG channel facilities and operations. Instead, should any expansion to PEG Access be contemplated by the City or by the County, that party should notify the other and request action as to whether the channels should be joint or not.

Recommendation:

- Eliminate the franchise provision related to joint PEG operations for the City and County; instead ask each agency to check in with the other and determine interest in joint operations, and determine distribution area of PEG channels at each potential change in PEG offerings.

E. City experience as Government & Education Access operator

1. BTV10 Overview, startup, funding, and subscribers

One access channel is currently in operation under the existing Bellingham franchise agreement. The Bellingham City Council designated this channel by City ordinance as a Government and Education Access channel in June 2000.

BTV10 is funded by a provision in the existing franchise requiring any amount of franchise fees collected in excess of 3.00% to be used for PEG operations.

Currently the franchise fee rate is at 4.25%, out of a maximum of 5.00%, with distribution and estimated annual revenue as follows:

- 3.00% - City of Bellingham General Fund – over \$500,000/year
- 1.25% - BTV10 Budget – over \$200,000/year

BTV10 can be viewed by all Comcast customers within Bellingham City limits as well as most Comcast subscribers located in Whatcom County.

The count of Comcast subscribers within City of Bellingham City limits in 2009 was just over 27,000.

2. BTV10 Role, Policies & Priorities

BTV10 provides an important communication service in a community that is experiencing diminished local media. BTV10 is essential to the City of Bellingham's

transparency and public involvement initiatives, and routinely partners with other public agencies to provide Government and Education content to the greater Bellingham community.

City priorities for BTV10 production services and airtime are:

- Available as needed to work with emergency management agencies to provide public information during emergencies;
- Public proceedings and meetings involving officials and activities of the City of Bellingham.
- Programs that explain policies and activities of the City of Bellingham or that solicit citizen input on these policies and programs;
- Issues of city-wide significance that are being addressed at the neighborhood or community level;
- Public meetings of other government agencies and programs about public policy issues that are relevant to or affect Bellingham citizens;
- Programs that feature cultural and historic aspects of the City and its citizens and other programs of general interest to the citizens of Bellingham;
- Public service announcements.

BTV10 essential to City transparency initiatives

The City of Bellingham has made significant investments in technology that allow City officials to maximize the use of BTV10 to meet its commitment to transparency and involving people in government decision-making. The centerpiece of this effort is the extensive coverage of the work of the Bellingham City Council. City Council committee meetings and regular meetings are aired live, gavel-to-gavel as they occur, then repeated on a regular schedule during the week following each meeting.

BTV10 also provides regular coverage of Bellingham Planning Commission public hearings, special presentations addressing topics of broad interest or current concern are regularly filmed and aired as well.

3. BTV10 - Government and Education Access Channel Programming and Use

Tables 4 and 5 below provide information about the quantity of programming, and nature of resources for BTV10 operation.

Table 4: BTV10 Programming Hours of First Run Programs for Key government access programs

Programming Type	2006	2007	2008	2009
Hours of first run City Council Committee Meetings	n/a	n/a	54:58	63:52
Hours of first run City Council Meetings	67:05	62:12	73:55	67:58
Hours of first run Special City Council Meetings	9:00	6:51	9:13	6:31
Hours of first run Planning Commission Meetings	38:40	19:22	31:40	33:14

Programming Type	2006	2007	2008	2009
Hours of first run Whatcom County Meetings	46:42	49:28	49:08	50:54
Hours of first run cablecasts Inside Bellingham Program	5:46	4:50	3:37	1:40
Hours of first-run Waterfront-related meetings and programs	27:02	12:23	24:44	8:51
Hours of first run Other various types of programs	n/a	n/a	3:14	34:44
Total Hours first-run programming for Key Programs	194:16	155:07	250:30	267:47

Table 5: BTV10 Activity and Resources

Activity	2007	2008	2009
# of Meetings filmed and aired	71	102	78
# Programs Produced over 10 minutes in length other than meetings	29	20	25
BTV10 – Facility rental expenses	\$15,472	\$15,545	\$15,696
BTV10 - Expenditures for computers and equipment	\$26,201	\$28,643	\$15,756
BTV10 - Expenditures for outside filming, production work, professional services	\$8,482	\$14,651	\$7,171
Direct Staff Resources in BTV10 Operation	1 Full-time Station coordinator 1419 hours worked by part- time assistants	1 Full-time Station coordinator 1757 hours worked by part- time assistants	1 Full-time Station coordinator 1266 hours worked by part- time assistants
Other Staff resources contributing to BTV10 operation	10% FTE – City Communications Manager 10% FTE- City I.T. Director	10% FTE – City Communications Manager 10% FTE- City I.T. Director	10% FTE – City Communications Manager 10% FTE- City I.T. Director

BTV10 use by other Government and Education organizations

BTV10 is designated as a Government and Education access station. The City welcomes eligible programs that it does not produce to be aired on BTV10. Programs are eligible to be aired when produced or sponsored by publicly funded education or government organizations, when those programs meet legal requirements and BTV10 technical standards.

Publicly funded organizations that air programming on BTV10 include:

Whatcom County Council
Whatcom Humane Society

Western Washington University
Bellingham Public Schools
Kulshan Community Land Trust
Whatcom Community College
U.S. Fish and Wildlife
Bellingham Technical College
WA State Dept. of Health
Whatcom Transportation Authority
WA State Traffic Safety Commission
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Admin.
Northwest Clean Air Agency
Sustainable Connections
WA State Legislature
WA Emergency Management

In addition to accepting programs that are fully produced by other organizations, BTV10 regularly produces programs in partnership with other public agencies. An example is the City's partnership with Western Washington University. The university organizes and promotes lectures on topics of wide community interest, held in City facilities where they are filmed by BTV10 staff and aired on BTV10. The list below are those lectures hosted in this manner during the first half of 2010:

Feb. 3: About Afghanistan—or, Can We Learn Anything Useful from History?

Lecture by David Curley, chair of the WWU Liberal Studies Department.

Feb. 17: Fruits, Veggies and Whole Grains: How Chemicals Affect Your Health

Lecture by Anu Singh-Cundy of the WWU Department of Biology.

March 10: Sustainable Urban Planning Concepts

Student presentations from the WWU Urban Transitions Studio.

March 16: Free Speech/Mary Beth Tinker

Presentation by Mary Beth Tinker, plaintiff in the Tinker v. Des Moines (1969) a landmark case upholding student free speech rights, hosted by WWU/Ralph Monroe Institute.

March 17: Disaster Risk Reduction: Haiti to Whatcom County

WWU student presentations and Haiti earthquake panel discussion.

May 4: Autism: It Takes a Village to Help a Child

Presentation by Eva Baharav, WWU associate professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders

May 12: The X-Ray Vision of Mathematics

Presentation by Stephen McDowall, WWU associate professor of Mathematics.

4. BTV10 - Viewership

Success of BTV10 or “Is anyone watching?”

City officials hear regularly from their constituents that BTV10 is an important and primary source of local information, particularly about City government. Scientifically gathered data supports this anecdotal evidence. The City of Bellingham conducts regular scientific surveys of residents asking numerous questions about City services, including BTV10. Table 6 below summarizes some BTV10-related results from 2006 and 2008; a

planned 2010 survey has not yet been conducted. (Complete reports of past surveying, including scientific methods, margins of error and results, can be found on the City website)

Table 6: City survey results

Survey item	2006	2008
% of voters (2006) and residents (2008) surveyed who have heard of BTV10	72%	70%
% of voters (2006) residents (2008) surveyed who watch BTV10 at least once per week	25%	19%

Note: 2006 survey polled random sample of City registered voters. 2008 survey polled random sample of City residents.

The most recent City survey containing questions about BTV10 was conducted in 2008. Results indicated that:

- Most respondents (70%) have heard of Bellingham’s city television channel known as BTV10.
- Among those who have heard of it, approximately half (49%) watch it once a month or more.
- Among those who ever watch BTV10, 40% were tuning in to watch a City Council meeting *sometimes* or *always* .

Among the most powerful, but less quantitative, evidence that people are watching is the experiences of the many people who appear on BTV10. City Council members, neighborhood leaders, university lecturers, City staff members, people testifying at public hearings and most others who are captured on camera eventually hear from their friends and family: “I saw you on BTV10!”

5. BTV10 - Transition to High Definition

During the course of the upcoming franchise, the City anticipates that BTV10 should be able to provide programming in High Definition signal.

Recommendation: With some notice from the City, Comcast should be prepared to provide channel 10 in High Definition on a 2nd channel, or, if sufficient percentage of the subscribers are receiving signals in High Definition, move channel 10 to a High Definition signal. Negotiation of PEG fees to provide for the necessary equipment, should be included.

6. BTV10 – Channel identity and placement

City’s current government access television channel is well known in the community as BTV10. Section 6.1 of the current franchise agreement identifies channel 10 as the initial PEG channel. The City expects that Comcast would continue to utilize channel 10 for distribution of this channel so that the City can maintain its BTV10 brand.

However with technology changes and developments over the future franchise period, the City recognizes that the distribution of, organization of, or methods of choosing and selecting channels may change.

Further, City should be able to provide information to Comcast to populate any interactive programming guides, so that current programming is available for BTV10 just as it is for other channels.

Recommendation: The City should maintain the BTV10 identity in the community. The City should negotiate the right to approve channel 10 placement in the Comcast system should Comcast take on any substantive reorganization of channel services or offerings. No change in channel 10 number or placement should occur without express notice and written approval by the City.

Comcast should label channel 10 as BTV10 on any online or interactive programming guides. Comcast should be required to provide tools for City to populate interactive programming guides with current programming schedule.

7. BTV10 – Current Equipment and Funding Capacity

BTV10 operations require a substantial amount of and variety of equipment to provide the current level of programs and services.

While much of the studio and edit workstation equipment is purchased and replaced using BTV10 budget and funds, the BTV10 revenues were not adequate to establish and upgrade the Council Chambers audio video systems.

The Chambers audio and video systems were purchased in 2005 with a one-time capital project appropriation from the City's Facilities fund.

Table 7: Current BTV10 Equipment inventory as of June 2010

BTV10 – Equipment and Systems	Estimated Value
Chambers Audio and Video System – includes 4 cameras, 25 microphones, hearing impaired system, 3 projectors, document camera, and other related equipment	\$165,295.00
Edit Workstation #1	2,830.00
Edit Workstation #2	2,830.00
Edit Workstation #3	4,630.00
Production Control – includes production switcher, video monitors, character generators, mixers, and other related equipment	29,720.00
Master Control – includes playback system, computers, emergency messaging device, and other related equipment	28,165.00
Duplication	2,250.00
Satellite System	2,170.00

BTV10 – Equipment and Systems	Estimated Value
General Office	13,950.00
Studio Equipment – includes cameras, camera support, teleprompter, and lights	14,745.00
Field Equipment – includes camera, lights, camera support, and sound recording equipment	12,450.00
Live Stream Equipment	2,000.00
Total Estimated Value	\$281,035.00

BTV10 Revenue - Funding capacity

BTV10 budget revenues, currently allocated at 1.25% of franchise fee revenues collected, is sufficient to pay for the following ongoing expenditures over time:

- Staff - 1 full time manager, some part-time hourly assistants, 10% salary of Communications Manager, 10% salary of I.T. Director
- Equipment replacement for minor studio equipment, satellite equipment, computer systems, and cameras
- Outside resources to support outside filming, outside professional services – consistent with current level of programming

Budget revenues are *not sufficient* to fully replace audio/video systems in use today, to expand on audio/video capabilities in additional rooms or facilities, or to pay for substantial expansion of programming.

Section 6.5 of the current franchise agreement stipulates that Funds for operation of PEG will be generated by additional franchise fee payable to the City beyond the 3% franchise fees described in Section 11.1, up to a total of 2%. The maximum franchise fee rate is 5%.

Recommendation:

- Funding for PEG operations should be established by policy makers and not be “set in stone” for the duration of the future franchise agreement. Any allocation of franchise fee revenues should be directed by City Council action.

8. BTV10 – Future Equipment Needs and Interests

The City has a need to purchase capital equipment to replace existing equipment to produce quality local government programming. The chart below outlines the capital equipment needs of the City over the next ten (10) years.

Table 8: Replacement Costs for existing equipment, plus anticipated upgrade to HD

FUNCTION	COST	LIFE	TOTAL
Council Chambers & Control Room: includes cameras, microphones, hearing impaired system, projectors, document	\$200,000	5 years	\$400,000

camera, other related equipment, and design and installation			
Editing Workstations (three) and software	\$11,000	5 years	\$22,000
Production Control system and equipment	\$30,000	5 years	\$60,000
Master Control system and equipment	\$30,000	5 years	\$60,000
Field Equipment	\$13,000	5 years	\$26,000
Studio Equipment	\$15,000	5 - 10 years	\$30,000
Other Equipment – Satellite, Livestream, duplication	\$7,000	5 years	\$14,000
Total equipment replacement needs over 10 years			\$612,000
Upgrade BTV10 equipment to HD Includes upgrades to equipment in Council Chambers, studio control, studio cameras, master control, editors, duplication, satellite system, live stream system			\$50,000 for HD compatible equipment for one equipment replacement lifecycle
Total equipment replacement including upgrade to HD			\$662,000

Table 9: Additional Capital Needs for Improved Services

FUNCTION	QUANTITY	COST	LIFE	TOTAL
Install audio/video capabilities similar to City Council Chambers in another facility: includes cameras, microphones, hearing impaired system, projectors, document camera, other related equipment, design and installation	1	\$250,000	6 - 10 years	\$250,000
Mobile production trailer Includes 20' trailer with racks, a/c distribution, a/v distribution, HVAC, cameras, a/v monitoring, DVR, signage OR Mobile production van Includes van, van conversion to include HVAC, racks, lighting, storage. Includes cameras, tripods, a/v monitoring, etc.	1	\$133,000 \$172,000	6-10 years	\$133,000 \$172,000

Recommendations:

- City staff should enhance outreach efforts to other publicly funded government and education institutions to enhance programming levels of government and access programming.
- City should maintain funding allocation level at 1.25% of franchise fees to maintain current operations and replace existing station equipment.
- Funding for PEG operations. Any funding allocation should be made by separate Council action and not within the franchise agreement, to retain flexibility over the future franchise period.
- Proposed franchise agreement should authorize use of PEG fees to provide for more robust equipment replacement, including replacement of Council Chambers systems and conversion to High Definition equipment. Negotiate PEG fee rate up to a maximum \$.50/subscriber/month based on these and other equipment needs as identified in this report, with up to three one-time capital grants of \$150,000 each.

III. ADDITIONAL CABLE-RELATED COMMUNITY NEEDS AND INTERESTS

A. Overview

The City and its consulting team have identified below the City of Bellingham’s future cable-related community needs and interests, in the form of eleven issues and areas of need of particular importance to the City and, where appropriate, recommendations to address them. This analysis is based on part on the needs assessment study presented in the preceding section and in part on the experience of the project team and those of cities around the country.

The first four of the eleven types of needs are described in earlier report sections, and are based on city’s technical inspection of the Bellingham Comcast plant, and based on experience as a franchising authority. These are as follows:

1. Need to follow-up on Plant Inspection
2. Needs as Franchising Authority
3. Needs as Government and Education Access Operator
4. Needs to provision internet services for a maximum of 5 city facilities and to all schools in the Bellingham school district

Additional needs and recommendations are described in Sections B-E, and Sections G-I, below. The needs are described and recommendations are made based on input received from the community, or based on review of current franchise provisions.

A summary of the eleven areas of need is provided in the Executive Summary of this report, and are listed in Tables 1 and 2 beginning on page 10.

B. Look for opportunities to influence cost and cost flexibility

Clearly cost containment and flexibility is one of the highest issues of concern for Bellingham citizens. In addition to concerns with Comcast costs, many Bellingham residents suggested that they would like to see options to control costs by paying for channels of interest in an “ala carte” fashion. Many citizens expressed interest in competition and some believed (incorrectly) that the City’s franchise agreement is an exclusive one.

Note that the City is not able to regulate Comcast rates and fees except on a very limited basis, based on current Federal laws.

Recommendations:

- City policy and code should continue to remain open to competitors, City should participate in programs that might provide for rate reduction due to competition.
- Provide communications to community that clarify and inform residents that franchise is not exclusive, per City of Bellingham Municipal Code.
- City elected officials should support initiatives locally, at state or federal level that would might provide for more competition or provide cost containment opportunities.

- Ala cart programming options are a strong interest and need of this community - preference – City negotiating team should stress the community’s strong interest in “ala carte” programming and cost control interests.
- Annual ascertainment process performed by Comcast should identify programming preferences to inform channel options and tiers. Results should be included in annual report to the City.
- It is important to citizens that a low-cost tier of services is offered. Preserve a low-cost tier with an appropriate blend of programming.
- Maintain discount program, with Comcast providing customer service responsibilities.

C. Customer Service Standards Needs

The City has the ability to establish and enforce strict customer service standards when it issues or renews a cable franchise. Standards to be adopted include service requirements, service and installation windows, rebates for outages, prohibiting downgrade and service removal charges and customer service facilities and hours.

Customer service standards cannot prevent all problems. The best consumer protection is a cable operator determined to make every customer a happy one. However, the City can provide a minimum standard required of the cable operator. As part of its Franchise renewal requirements, the City should address the need for specific customer service standards for cable television. These standards should be imposed pursuant to the City's legal powers under § 632 ("consumer protection") of the Cable Act, as amended. These standards should be incorporated into the City's Franchise Ordinance.

In general, such standards address the specific performance of the franchisee in the areas of telephone response, repair service, installation, billing practices, and system reliability. Whenever possible, specific, quantifiable, and verifiable standards are preferred over more general and vague goals. The City should be aware that the adoption of such performance standards has been a trend in many local jurisdictions as well as on a national level. The local standards, as might be expected, vary widely, depending on past operator performance, franchise authority intent, and other local conditions.

Based on the City's review of the information gathered during the needs assessment process, it appears the customer service standards adopted by the Federal Communications Commission at 47 C.F.R. § 76.309 should be used as a baseline to protect the City's interests with respect to Comcast's customer service. Some specific additions are also recommended based on community needs.

Bellingham residents reported customer service concerns related to the Comcast telephone system. Residents reported long hold times, difficulty in reaching a “real” person. See Exhibit A for comments received related to hold times.

Some Bellingham residents also reported difficulties with sound or picture quality. See Exhibit A to see responses to questions about channels with sound or picture quality difficulties.

Recommendations:

- Use FCC customer service standards as a baseline for customer service standards. Include these into the City's future franchise agreement. FCC customer service standards are included in Exhibit F.
- In order to meet community need and concerns, add the following requirements as part of the future franchise agreement:
 - Comcast should provide clearer reporting on hold time experiences for Bellingham customers. The hold-times reported by Bellingham customers does not reflect adequate customer service.
 - Comcast's phone system is cumbersome and should be adjusted to provide an easier way to reach a "real" person. A "dial 0" option is recommended.
 - The annual ascertainment survey conducted by Comcast should identify problems with sound or picture quality, in a manner that would provide Comcast with sufficient information to follow up and correct issues.

D. Need to maintain local office and increase clarity of customer service information on Comcast bill

Bellingham citizens believe that having a local office is important. Bellingham residents would be better served if local office hours and services were provided on customer bills.

The images below are taken from a June, 2010 bill and illustrates the current Customer service information provided on the back of the bill:



Note that customers are given a number of different telephone numbers to reach for different purposes. Note that the location and hours of the local office is not provided.

Recommendations:

Proposed franchise agreement should include the following:

- Comcast should be required to maintain a local service office in Bellingham
- Comcast should provide local service address and hours of operation on the bill, or provide reference on bill for how to find local office and determine office hours
- City should ask Comcast to review the customer service sections of the bill currently being sent to Bellingham customers. Comcast should make changes so that customer service information can be interpreted more simply and easily.

E. Maximize Franchise fee rate at 5%

One key issue to be addressed during franchise renewal is: "What is the appropriate level of the franchise fee?" While federal law sets a maximum level--five percent (5%) of gross cable revenues--there is no minimum. There is, in fact, no statutory requirement for any franchise fee to be paid at all. Most franchising authorities do charge a franchise fee; the majority of franchises signed after the 1984 Cable Act are for the maximum five percent (5%). The chart below provides information on franchise fees charged by some cities in Washington State.

Table 10: Comparison of Cable Franchise Fees

(2008 AWC Tax and User Fee Survey, updated in May 2010 by City of Bellingham staff)

City	Cable	PEG Fees
Auburn	5%	\$0.35/subscriber/month
Bellevue	5%	\$.25/subscriber/month
Bellingham	4.25%	
Everett	5%	\$1.00/subscriber/month
Kent	5%	No PEG fees, currently in negotiations
Kirkland	5%	\$.25 per quarter on each subscriber
Olympia	5%	\$0.30 per subscriber per month for access capital costs
Redmond	5%	\$1/month/subscriber PEG fee
Renton	5%	\$0.17 per subscriber/month
Seattle	4.20%	\$.12/subscriber/month PEG fees Note that Seattle has a 10% utility tax for Cable, but Telecomm. utility tax is 6%
Spokane	5%	\$0.50/subscriber/month capital contribution
Spokane Valley	5%	\$0.35/subscriber/month pd quarterly as capital contribution

City	Cable	PEG Fees
Tacoma	5%	1% of gross revenue payable with monthly Franchise Fees, in special revenue fund
Yakima	5%	Equipment & facilities grant of \$118,320 paid every 3 years over the course of the 20 year franchise agreement signed in 1994

Fee-related Information
<p>Franchise fee - includes any tax, fee, or assessment of any kind imposed by a franchising authority or other governmental entity on a cable operator or cable subscriber, or both, solely because of their status as such;</p> <p>Capital Support/PEG - The City can mandate capital to support PEG access equipment and facilities but not for operational support (i.e. staff). Capital can take the form of an upfront grant, periodic grant, monthly per subscriber fee (e.g. \$0.05 - \$1.00 or a % of Gross Revenues).</p> <p>Pass-through of costs = Operator can "pass-through" on subscriber monthly bills all franchise imposed costs including PEG costs.</p>

One key reason for issuing a cable television franchise is that Comcast uses the public rights-of-way to run cable and provide service. Apart from ensuring the public health, safety, and welfare in regard to this use, the City has a legitimate right (and perhaps even responsibility) to obtain fair rent for allowing this public resource to be used for the benefit of a private cable company to derive a profit. All residents, not just cable subscribers, must pay the intangible but real costs of the facilities in the public rights-of-way: cost of right-of-way acquisition and administration, reduced aesthetics, disruption for installation and maintenance, obstructions for municipal construction projects and pressure on landscaping.

If the City fails to collect such a rent, it means the general citizens are subsidizing the cable subscribers. When there is plenty of space in the public rights-of-way to accommodate all the desired uses, this may seem to be a minor issue. But the grant of a cable franchise is, for all intents and purposes, a permanent license to use those rights-of-way. In the future, if there are too many competing uses, the City will probably not have the option of removing the cable operator in favor of a user who would be paying a more equitable rent to the City.

It also takes considerable time and resources for City staff, boards and elected officials to administer the cable franchise and the provision of cable services in the City. Ordinances must be drafted and updated. Reports from the operator must be reviewed and, periodically, data submitted should be checked. Some of these costs may be substantial, while some may demand little in resources from the City.

The franchise could be transferred several times in a short period, with the City needing to evaluate each transfer request. The City could face litigation over a proposal to overbuild the cable system, or a dispute with Comcast over interpretation of franchise language. The City may never have to cover such expenses out of the franchise fee, but past history has shown that such disputes do occur. Given the potential expense of legal proceedings, the five percent (5%)

franchise fee certainly is not a case of over-insurance. Furthermore, given that Comcast is currently one of a handful of private entities allowed to use the public rights-of-way to generate a profit, the franchise fee should also be viewed as a modest rental fee which compensates the residents for Comcast's use of the rights-of-way.

Section 6.5 of the current franchise agreement stipulates that Funds for operation of PEG will be generated by additional franchise fee payable to the City beyond the 3% franchise fees described in Section 11.1, up to a total of 2%. The maximum franchise fee rate is 5%. City staff recommend that this revenue allocation be removed from the future franchise agreement, and suggest that any allocation of franchise fee revenues be directed by City Council action.

Section 11.2 of the current franchise agreement describes requirements for auditing of Comcast financial records. These requirements should be maintained in the future franchise agreement.

Recommendations:

- Incorporate a five percent (5%) franchise fee in the Proposed Franchise along with a Franchise Fee Payment Worksheet, which requires Comcast to document and submit its revenue sources to make sure the appropriate franchise fee is paid.
- Remove reference to allocation of franchise fee revenues from the Comcast agreement. Any allocation of franchise fee revenues should be made by Council action in the future.

F. Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) Access - Overview

1. Public, Education, and Government Access – Definitions

Although the Cable Act provides no definition for PEG channels, the cable industry and Franchising Authorities across the country have generally recognized the following definitions.

1. Public Access Channel:

Local programming created by the wide variety of individuals, groups and organizations within a community. The channel is noncommercial and each producer typically has full editorial control. Public access channels, equipment and facilities are usually available for use on a first come, first served basis and the cable operator does not exert any editorial control except over unprotected speech.

2. Education Access Channel:

Channels administered and programming created by staff, faculty and students of local educational institutions. Programs usually center around the activities of public schools and colleges in the community, and may include fully-televised courses of instruction.

3. Government Access Channel:

Channels administered and programming produced by local government staff and volunteers. Gavel-to-gavel coverage of public meetings is the mainstay of this category, but informative programs on such topics as fire safety, health and recreational opportunities provided by local government are also offered.

2. PEG Requirements in Franchise Agreements - Background

PEG requirements can take several forms¹. Franchising authorities can:

1. Require operators to designate channels for PEG use;
2. Establish requirements for equipment and facilities – for example, requirements for studios and cameras;
3. Establish rules for the management and use of the facilities and channels devoted to PEG use;
4. Enforce promises for services made by a franchise applicant.

In any event, before issuing a franchise, a franchising authority can insist that the cable operator “provide adequate PEG access channel capacity, facilities or financial support.”²

As Congress noted when it first passed cable legislation:

One of the greatest challenges over the years in establishing communications policy has been assuring access to the electronic media by people other than the licensees or owners of those media. The development of cable television, with its abundance of channels, can provide . . . the meaningful access that . . . has been difficult to obtain.

*Almost all recent franchise agreements provide for access by local governments, schools, and non-profit and community groups over so-called "PEG" (public, educational and governmental) channels. Public access channels are often the video equivalent of the speaker's soapbox or the electronic parallel to the printed leaflet... PEG channels also contribute to an informed citizenry by bringing local schools into the home and by showing the public local government at work.*³

While there are certainly many communities that have no PEG channels, communities that have concluded that PEG requirements serve important community needs and interests often require three or more channels. That is because the programming interests of the PEG entities that use the channels are diverse. Separating the channels by use allows different user groups to schedule and develop programming of a particular type, and ensures that viewers have a general idea as to the type of programming that will be available on each channel. In addition, providing for adequate access from the outset avoids potential subscriber disruption that could occur if a community begins with too few channels and must displace channels in order to obtain adequate capacity. If it turns out that there is not enough programming the cable operator can use the PEG channel capacity for its own purposes.

The PEG channels can be used to transmit voice, data and video signals to subscribers. It is recognized, however, that channels alone are not enough. Resources must also be available to enable potential users to produce programming. The channels need to be publicized; potential users need to be trained; equipment and facilities need to be available to produce good quality

¹1984 House Report at 68, 1984 U.S.C.C.A.N. at 4705 (franchising authorities may require, among other things, “satellite earth stations, uplinks, studios and production facilities, vans and cameras for PEG use”).

²47 U.S.C. §541(a)(4).

³1984 House Report at 30, 1984 U.S.C.C.A.N. at 4667

programming (audio and video must be satisfactory); equipment and facilities need to be available to edit programming; necessary facilities and equipment need to be in place in order to send signals to the head end from origination points, and then to subscribers via the head end. It is difficult for access to succeed without these resources. Many franchise agreements contain commitments by cable operators to provide support for PEG access in addition to providing a 5% franchise fee to the community.

PEG use is changing as cable technology changes. Access centers originally were concerned with the provision of video programming, just as cable operators focused on the provision of video programming. A number of access centers are now evolving into community media centers which provide opportunities to take advantage of the Internet and cable's new technical capabilities to provide diverse, multimedia information to the home (and to provide everyone in the community the opportunity to participate in the Information Age).

In sum, the developments in communities that have determined that PEG access can serve important community needs and interests suggests that (a) multiple channels can be devoted to PEG use; (b) operators may provide support for PEG access in addition to the franchise fee; and (c) PEG access requirements should be structured to enable the community to take full advantage of advances in cable technology, including advances in interactivity and in digital capacity.

G. Expanded Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) Access – Needs and Interests

1. Education Access Channels

The City received substantial interest and need described above related to Education Access "E" channels, and interest from the public in educational and other community programming.

Recommendations:

- Proposed franchise should include provision for one additional E channel, to be granted for operation based on City council action
- Proposed franchise agreement should include provision for 2nd E channel – to be implemented at time sufficient community readiness is determined by City Council, and after first E channel has sufficient first-run programming
- Any allocation of franchise fees to support ongoing operating costs for education access television should be made outside of the franchise agreement and should instead occur by City Council action
- Education access operators should have ability to provide information to Comcast to populate any interactive programming guides, so that current programming is available for Education Access just as it is for other channels
- Channel number and placement should be logical and intuitive to subscribers. Changes to channel numbers and placement cannot occur without express notice and written approval by the City.

- Proposed franchise should provide for implementation of PEG fees including capital grants

2. Public Access television

City received significant interest in community programming as a high priority. Interest in Public Access came from a small but enthusiastic group of residents. The City received a proposal from WCTC for implementation of Public Access television. This interest is in addition to past City Councils' interest in considering proposals for "P".

City Administration needs regarding Public Access

The needs described below are important considerations because they help ensure that Public Access services and programs are perceived as truly independent, not subject to influence by government. They help provide clarity to viewers about who is sponsoring programming. They also help ensure the sustainability of Public Access in our community.

Needs/criteria for initiating Public Access services in Bellingham:

- Public Access should be operated by an organization outside of City government.
- Public Access programming should be presented on a channel separate from Government programming.
- Public Access should be developed in phases with careful oversight, particularly in light of current economic conditions.
- Public Access service providers should be selected using competitive processes designed to ensure they have financial, technical and managerial capability to initiate and maintain operations.

In light of these needs, which will help ensure the credibility and long-term stability of future Public Access operations, a change in designation of BTV10 to include "P" is *not* recommended.

Should the City Council determine that Public Access television should be provided, the proposed implementation plan in Table 11 below describes a two-year plan for thoughtfully evaluating "P" to ensure it can be successfully and sustainably launched and maintained.

Table 11: Potential two-year implementation plan for Public "P" access television

Year	Key "P" implementation steps
2011	New Franchise approved Franchise fees raised to 5%

Year	Key “P” implementation steps
	Additional access channels available per franchise
Year 1 (Actual date per City Council direction, 2012 at earliest)	<p>City Council considers authorizing “P” channel, via formal review and action</p> <p>If “P” direction is approved by Council, then issue RFP soliciting competitive proposals for “P” channel operations</p> <p>If Council accepts a proposal for “P” operations,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine via Whatcom County Council whether that channel will be distributed in Whatcom County outside of Bellingham City limits • Notify Comcast to establish “P” channel in future, authorize “P” channel operations • Council action to determine allocation of franchise fee revenue, if any to “P” • Council action to determine use of PEG capital grant or ongoing PEG fees
Year 2	<p>Implement and go live with Public Access television.</p> <p>Station location, setup to head-end, equipment acquisition, Policy and oversight established. Begin public communications and receipt and cablecast of programming.</p>

Recommendations to provide implementation path for Public Access:

- Proposed franchise agreement should include provision for one “P” Channel – to be implemented at time sufficient community readiness is determined by City Council
- Proposed franchise agreement should provide for implementation of PEG fees and capital grants to support equipment needs. If PEG fees are shown on subscriber bill, show in one line only.
- Proposed franchise should require Comcast to build infrastructure, within 6 months’ notice, to connect named location in Bellingham to Comcast head end for purposes of “P” channel distribution
- Public Access operator should have ability to provide information to Comcast to populate any interactive programming guides, so that current programming is available for Public Access just as it is for other channels
- Channel number and placement should be logical and intuitive to subscribers. Changes to channel numbers and placement cannot occur without express notice and written approval by the City.

H. Other important franchise provisions needed

1. Grant of Authority

Pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 626, Comcast has requested renewal of its existing cable television franchise in the City. Pursuant to § 626, the City has performed a detailed needs assessment study to determine the future cable related needs and interests of the residents within the City. Nothing in the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984, as amended by the Cable Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992 and the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (hereinafter collectively the "Cable Act"), requires that the City also review the needs and interests within the City with respect to other communications services which Comcast may ultimately desire to provide, unless so requested. Such advanced communication services may include local telephone service, cellular telephone service, personal communication service, broadband or internet service or other similar non-traditional cable television services.

If Comcast provides a proposal which meets the needs identified by the City, the City should limit the grant of any franchise solely to the provision of "cable services" as that term is defined in federal law. If Comcast desires later to provide other advanced communications services over its "cable system", it may follow applicable local, state and federal laws to receive the necessary authority to utilize the City's public rights-of-way for the provision of such advanced communication services. To the extent approval by the City is required before Comcast may provide such advanced communication services, that authority can be reviewed and considered by the City at such time as Comcast seeks to provide such services.

At this time, Comcast has not requested authority from the City for the provision of such services, but rather, its request has been limited solely to the provision of "cable services" over a "cable system".

Recommendation: The City should strictly condition the grant of a non-exclusive franchise to Comcast for the purpose of erecting, constructing, operating, maintaining and repairing all necessary fixtures and facilities to operate a "cable system" providing "cable service" within the City.

2. Operational Reports

A mechanism should be included within any franchise allowing the City to evaluate and review the performance of a cable operator during the term of the Franchise. Such a periodic evaluation and review provision should include mechanisms which provide that:

1. If the City uncovers noncompliance the operator will address and resolve such noncompliance;
2. If the noncompliance is not cured, liquidated damages from a security fund will be imposed; and
3. The operator and the City can modify and/or amend the Franchise to more accurately reflect changed circumstances in the cable television industry or in the laws or regulations governing regulation of cable television service.
4. A detailed periodic evaluation review provision and liquidated damages provision will be included in the Proposed Franchise.

Moreover, Comcast or any other franchised cable operator should maintain on file with the City a current map or set of maps drawn to scale showing the system and all equipment installed or

in place in the streets and other public places. Such a provision of maps will ensure the City can proceed to maintain and improve its public rights-of-way to meet all necessary health, safety and welfare responsibilities for residents. Any changes in the maps provided by Comcast should be provided to the City in a reasonable period of time in a format which can be readily incorporated into the City's GIS mapping system.

Recommendation: Incorporate into a franchise agreement language that allows the City to keep and maintain a current system map, review the performance of a cable operator during the term of the franchise, including methods to resolve noncompliance, review provisions, update the agreement.

3. Transfer or Assignment

Part of the City's needs assessment process was a review of Comcast's past performance under the existing Franchise. To the extent Comcast submits a proposal sufficient to meet the City's future cable-related needs and interests, a Franchise will be granted to Comcast. However, Comcast should not be allowed to subsequently transfer or assign the Franchise to an entity lacking sufficient legal, technical or financial qualifications to provide the same services within the City.

Typically provisions are included within the Franchise to prevent the sale, assignment, or other transfer of the system in whole or in part to any other entity unless it is first approved by the City, which approval should not be unreasonably withheld. These provisions should be consistent with state and federal law but should be sufficiently detailed to clarify exactly what constitutes a transfer or assignment and specify the exact procedure which is to be followed by the City to access the qualifications of the proposed transferee. Such provisions will be incorporated into the Proposed Franchise.

Recommendation: A provision should be included within the Franchise to prevent the sale, assignment, or other transfer of the system in whole or in part to any other entity unless it is first approved by the City.

4. Categories of Programming

Section 624(b) of the Cable Act, (47 U.S.C. § 544(b)) provides that a franchising authority may enforce any requirements contained within the franchise for broad categories of video programming or other services.

While the City recognizes and respects the First Amendment rights of cable operators such as Comcast, the City's needs assessment process has demonstrated that subscribers find they are continually experiencing rate increases without a change in programming. There appears to be concerns about the mix of programming offered by Comcast.

Recommendation: City should communicate to Comcast that these customer concerns should be taken into consideration when determining its programming line-up.

5. Insurance Requirements; Indemnification; Bonds; Letters of Credit; Damages

Franchises typically include provisions that are designed to (a) ensure that the City, and the City's citizens, bears no risk as a result of a grantee's use of rights-of-way; and (b) ensure that the grantee complies with applicable requirements, and if it does not, the City can complete the required work and obtain compensation for the damages caused. As to the first point, the

operator can cause damage to public and private property when it is in the rights-of-way. It can create hazards that may lead to lawsuits. It should be clear that the City should bear no risk associated with such suits, and what is more, the City has an interest in assuring that the cable operator has the insurance and other protections in place so that it can be held responsible for the damage that it causes.

In addition, the City needs to enter and use the rights-of-way constantly. The use by the cable operator is an important use, but that use is secondary to other uses. If, by reason of allowing a cable operator to use the rights-of-way, the City were exposed to liability if it caused damage to the cable operator's property, the City's potential liability would be enormous and its ability to use its own property limited. In commercial leases, landlords usually require tenants to assume all risks that flow from the occupancy of the building: a landlord doesn't, for example, agree typically to compensate the tenant for business losses if a roof leaks. The City cannot afford to assume any risks associated with the use of the rights-of-way by a cable operator.

Performance guarantees, in the form of letters of credit and bonds, ensure that work that the cable operator promises to perform is performed. If the City's only remedy is a lawsuit, the benefits that are promised will inevitably be delayed and may in many cases be deferred forever. By ensuring that there are funds available the City ensures that the benefits promised are delivered.

As a related matter, there are a number of franchise requirements where noncompliance could significantly reduce the benefits of the franchise, and thus harm the City, but where the amount of damages is hard to estimate. Because of this, it is essential to include liquidated damages amounts, and to make it clear that those damages apply from the time a breach occurs. This ensures that the cable operator is not rewarded for non-compliance, and ensures that it does not adopt a policy of only complying when caught.

Recommendation: Include provisions in the franchise that are designed to (a) ensure that the City, and the City's citizens, bears no risk as a result of Comcast's use of rights-of-way; and (b) ensure that Comcast complies with applicable requirements, and if it does not, the City can complete the required work and obtain compensation for the damages caused.

I. Length of Franchise Term

The Comcast Franchise has a term of fifteen (15) years. Historically, many renewals were for 15 years ; however, many recent renewals have been for shorter terms. There are no statutory requirements regarding term length, and little financial rationale given that most system have been fully amortized. Cable operators naturally desire longer-length franchises, while cities have been arguing for shorter terms at renewal. Longer terms allow the operator to amortize capital investments more easily, while shorter lengths allow the franchising authority more control over the franchise's material terms. Thus, the franchise period has become a powerful bargaining chip in the renewal process.

Since the renewal process represents the franchise authority's primary opportunity to revise the principal provisions of the franchise, it stands to reason that more frequent renewals and shorter periods would be more in the City's interest than the operator's. At renewal, the franchise authority can impose franchise changes (such as increased franchise fees and additional requirements for local access programming) without negotiating the operator's agreement; the operator must accept them as part of the renewed franchise.

Clearly, some reasonable period is necessary for the operator to be able to finance capital improvements, enter into longer-term contracts with program suppliers, and assure continuity in operations. Any term less than five years would probably not seem reasonable for these purposes and, as the Cable Act requires a three-year renewal process, such a short term would dictate an almost continual franchise renewal. On the other hand, renewed franchises have been reported recently with terms from 7 to 12 years, although these smaller terms are typically dependent upon the amount of capital proposed by the cable operator to improve the cable system.

The length of the franchise is one of the most significant decisions a City has to make. It must consider the alternatives carefully. The City should be prepared to fix the term at a reasonable length and to justify its decision based on the commitments made by Comcast as part of its renewal proposal.

Recommendation: To the extent Comcast meets the other cable-related needs and interests identified in this report, a franchise term of 10 years is recommended.

J. Potential Timeline for Financial Decisions based on Report Recommendations

Below is a possible sequence of events related to financial decisions that could be made over the life of the future franchise agreement.

Table 12: Funding related actions - potential timeline

Year	Funding Related decisions
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Franchise approved • Franchise Fees Raised to 5% • Allocation of Franchise fee revenue determined by Council action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council directs that 1.25% of 5% of franchise fees be put toward BTV10 Operations
At any time throughout life of franchise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant operation of other access channels based upon determination of readiness. • Consider any change to allocation of franchise fee revenue • Implement PEG capital grant or fees to pay for capital equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Request up to 3 capital grants for PEG capital equipment, of up to \$150,000 each. ○ If PEG fees are added to subscriber bills, those fees should not exceed \$.50/subscriber per month. If PEG fees are shown on bills, they should be shown in one line on the bill.
Year 1 - At any time, starting with 2012, should Council wish to explore Public Access	<p>Explore Public Access operator options.</p> <p>Assuming Council approval, issue competitive RFP for “P” channel operations proposals</p> <p>If Council accepts a Public Access proposal,</p>

Year	Funding Related decisions
Television Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine via Whatcom County council whether channel will be distributed in Whatcom County outside of Bellingham City limits• Notify Comcast to establish “P” channel in future, authorize P channel operations• Council action to determine any funding support (franchise fees and/or PEG fees)
Year 2 – potential Public Access television implementation	<p>Implement and go live with Public Access television.</p> <p>Station location, setup to head-end, equipment acquisition, Policy and oversight established. Begin public communications and receipt and cablecast of programming.</p>

IV. EXHIBITS

A. EXHIBIT A – Web site survey results

1. Web site survey - Bellingham cable television services survey questions and results – Filtered for those that state they live in Bellingham

Web site survey results for Bellingham residents is below. Web site survey results for all respondents will be made available on the City's web site at www.cob.org.

Table 13: Web Site Survey results for Bellingham Respondents

Zoomerang Survey Results

Bellingham cable television services survey

Response Status: Completes

Filter: Custom Filter-Within Bellingham City Limits

Jun 25, 2010 8:56 AM PST

1. Choose the answer below that best describes where you live:

Within Bellingham City limits	320	100%
Outside Bellingham City limits	0	0%
Total	320	100%

2. Does your household currently subscribe to cable television from Comcast?

Yes (please skip to question #5)	261	82%
No	59	18%
Total	320	100%

3. If you have never subscribed to cable television, why not? Please select all that apply. (Most questions below apply to cable subscribers. After completing this answer, please skip to question 22)

Not available	1	4%
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Cost	10	38%
Have satellite dish	2	8%
Don't want/don't watch TV	3	12%
Lack of choice of cable companies	12	46%
Other, please specify	10	38%

4. If you have subscribed in the past, why did you stop? Please select all that apply.

Don't like the channels	20	32%
Cost	48	76%
Service issue(s)	21	33%
Moved	6	10%
Got satellite dish	7	11%
Other, please specify	13	21%

5. What cable television services do you currently receive in your Comcast subscription? (Choose all that apply)

Only basic or "limited" cable plan, includes local broadcast channels, popular cable networks.	85	32%
Digital Cable Plan (such as Digital Economy or Starter or Preferred): basic plan + channels such as CNN, Disney, some HD.	169	64%
Premium channels (HBO, sports entertainment, etc.).	46	17%
Pay-per-view channels.	21	8%
Additional languages (Comcast en Espanol, International Premium Services).	3	1%
Don't know	5	2%

6. Taken as a whole, do you believe that the prices for cable television services from Comcast are:

Lower than expected	3	1%
Right amount	23	7%
Too expensive	284	91%
Don't know	3	1%

Total	313	100%
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7. How important do you feel it is to have the existing basic or "limited" cable plan (featuring channels such as KOMO, KING, KIRO, BTV10, etc.), offering fewer channels of programming at a lower cost?

Very important	231	74%
Somewhat	32	10%
Important	21	7%
Only slightly important	17	5%
Not at all important	12	4%
Total	313	100%

8. Do you feel special discounts for "limited" plan basic cable television service should be made available to low-income senior citizens or low-income people with disabilities?

Yes	242	77%
No	44	14%
Don't know	29	9%
Total	315	100%

9. How satisfied are you, overall, with your cable television service from Comcast? Please answer using the rating scale below, where 5 means "extremely satisfied" and 1 means "very unsatisfied."

Very Unsatisfied	67	22%
Unsatisfied	91	30%
Somewhat Satisfied	93	31%
Very Satisfied	35	12%
Extremely Satisfied	18	6%
Total	304	100%

10. Below is a list of cable television service features. For each one, please rate your service with Comcast on a 1-5 scale, where (1) means "very unsatisfied" and (5) is "extremely satisfied"? Select "N/A" if you don't know.

City of Bellingham
Cable Television Franchise Renewal – Needs Assessment Report

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	Very Unsatisfied	2	3	4	Extremely Satisfied	N/A
Quality of the picture	11 4%	24 8%	73 24%	123 41%	64 21%	8 3%
Quality of the sound	14 5%	36 12%	78 26%	106 35%	58 19%	11 4%
Number of channels available	48 16%	43 14%	69 23%	83 27%	48 16%	11 4%
Accuracy of your monthly cable bill	34 11%	42 14%	66 22%	94 31%	45 15%	22 7%

11. Are there specific channels on which you experience poor picture quality or other reception problems?

55 Responses

12. During just the past two years, have you visited the Comcast Bellingham office for any reason?

Yes	194	62%
No	115	37%
Don't remember	3	1%
Total	312	100%

13. For what reasons have you visited the Comcast office during the past two years? (Choose all that apply)

Billing questions	37	18%
To change type of service, such as to add/remove channels	61	29%
To change number of television sets connected to cable	31	15%
Paying cable bill	35	17%
Cable outage/loss of signal	16	8%
Signal quality problems	22	11%
Receive/return equipment	163	78%
Other, please specify	36	17%

14. How important is it to you that Comcast operate a full-service local office in Bellingham?

Very important	153	49%
Important	71	23%
Not that important	42	13%
Not at all important	21	7%
Don't know	25	8%
Total	312	100%

15. How satisfied have you been with the following aspects of Comcast services? Please rate these services using a 1-5 scale, where (1) means "very unsatisfied" and (5) is "extremely satisfied"? Select "N/A" if you don't know.

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	Very unsatisfied	2	3	4	Extremely satisfied	N/A
Ability to reach customer service by telephone	53 17%	50 16%	75 25%	73 24%	36 12%	18 6%
Ability to use the phone tree to reach the correct representative or to reach a real person to assist you	65 21%	74 24%	68 22%	49 16%	20 7%	27 9%
Length of time you were left on hold	78 26%	69 23%	66 22%	57 19%	12 4%	22 7%
Friendliness of the customer service representative	27 9%	30 10%	82 27%	88 29%	57 19%	18 6%
Ability of the customer service representative to answer your questions and/or resolve your issue	52 17%	51 17%	63 21%	77 25%	40 13%	22 7%
Promptness of service technicians in keeping scheduled appointments	31 10%	49 16%	52 17%	69 23%	55 18%	49 16%

16. What is the longest time you have had to wait on hold before talking to a live Comcast customer service representative?

Up to 30 seconds	16	6%
Up to 2 minutes	58	21%
Up to 5 minutes	83	30%
Up to 10 minutes	66	24%

If over 10 minutes, estimate how long it was before your call was answered:	51	19%
Total	274	100%

17. In your opinion, what is a reasonable amount of time to wait on hold before talking to a live Comcast customer service representative?

Up to 30 seconds	61	20%
Up to 2 minutes	174	57%
Up to 5 minutes	61	20%
Up to 10 minutes	2	1%
Over 10 minutes	0	0%
Don't know	5	2%
Total	303	100%

18. During just the past two years, can you estimate how many times you've lost your entire cable signal for a period of 15 minutes or more?

None	51	17%
Don't know	84	28%
Estimated number of services outages in the past two years:	162	55%
Total	297	100%

19. How satisfied were you with the length of time it took the company to restore your cable service? Would you say they were:

Extremely responsive	19	7%
Very responsive	77	28%
Somewhat responsive	97	35%
Not at all responsive	21	8%
Don't know/don't remember	62	22%
Total	276	100%

20. Please rate the importance of having the types of programming listed below provided as part of your cable service. Indicate either high interest, medium interest or low interest:

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	High	Medium	Low
Community news, events and announcements	187 60%	83 27%	40 13%
Government meetings (City Council, planning commission, etc.)	130 42%	93 30%	86 28%
Educational programs (university classes & presentations, K-12 programs)	125 41%	111 36%	71 23%
School sporting events	64 21%	103 34%	137 45%
Area performing arts events	100 32%	136 44%	72 23%
Information about local non-profit organizations	80 26%	143 46%	87 28%

21. Please tell us how important the following are to you as we consider the renewal of the Comcast cable television franchise in Bellingham:

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	High	Medium	Low
Customer service	244 79%	56 18%	8 3%
Signal quality	261 84%	36 12%	12 4%
Community programming	135 44%	113 37%	59 19%
Expanded channel capacity	131 43%	108 35%	66 22%
Programming variety	192 62%	91 30%	25 8%
Improved technologies	170 56%	99 32%	37 12%

22. Please provide any other comments you have regarding Comcast's cable television service in Bellingham.

218 Responses

Demographic information

23. What best describes your home?

Single family home	250	79%
Multi-family residence (such as an apartment or condo)	68	21%
Total	318	100%

24. What is your age range?

Under 18	0	0%
18 - 25	24	8%
26 - 35	67	21%
36 - 50	86	27%
50 - 62	72	23%
62 and above	70	22%
Total	319	100%

2. **Web site survey – open-ended comments**

The table below reflects the responses received to the survey question that asks respondents to provide any other comments you have regarding Comcast's cable television service in Bellingham.

Table 14: Web-based survey – Open ended comments from City resident respondents

General Survey Comments from Web-based survey- Responses for those stated that they live within City of Bellingham City limits
<p>- Too expensive for what we get. Have to purchase bigger package than we want or use to get sports package for one member of household. We don't use 95% of what is available in the package we have to purchase, will likely cancel after great "starter" deal expires.</p> <p>- It has become quite complicated to manage the television/cable box/multiple remotes/parent control passwords in my home. I'm not a techno-phob. Not sure how less experienced people/the elderly deal with it. Seems needlessly cumbersome and customer un-friendly.</p> <p>- Very supportive of increased government program offerings, more educational programming, such as lectures, presentations from local and regional universities. Less interested in traditional community television; would not watch locally produced programs, nor would we use public access facilities.</p>
<p>I am wondering: Why does it take so long to get a cable truck out to your house, when a comcast employee using a company truck is shopping for collectable toys every morning 8am at Target? If employees can use work trucks and work time to go shopping, no wonder the cable bill is so high.</p>
<p>A suggestion I have is to create some kind of sound leveling, shows play ok in sound quality but when commercials come on they often tend to be too loud and sometimes too quite. Often times I need to turn the volume down when commercials are aired, thank-you.</p>
<p>About the hold time question...Comcast now offers the option to have them call you back instead of waiting on hold, which works very well. I would like to select channels "a la carte" as opposed to having to choose a package with a bunch i'm not interested in. Also, technical quality is quite poor for many movies that have been compressed for on demand playback. It would be nice to have a "scene feature" to resume on-demand programming, so you don't have to take 10 minutes to fast-forward back to the place you stopped watching (if it's more than 24 hours from when you started)</p>
<p>add more canadian channels, such as chek tv-victoria, vancouver channel.</p>
<p>After communicating with them 3 ways (phone, in-home, and online chat), they couldn't get my personally owned DVR to find their channels. My research showed that other Comcast areas have the proper equipment (cable card rental) available to make my DVR work with their setup, but Bellingham requires that I rent their DVR instead. That's wrong!</p>
<p>All shopping channels should be elective, not a part of the basic service. Especially for homebound people who are not necessarily designated as "low-income"</p>
<p>Always increasing rates and forcing people to go beyond their means to get the extent of serves -- like ESPN -- that they want. They have a monopoly and can do or not do or cut as they see fit.</p>

General Survey Comments from Web-based survey- Responses for those stated that they live within City of Bellingham City limits
Always received good service from Comcast.
Analog Limited Basic service (Ch's 2-28; 78) requiring no Comcast STB could be provided at no monthly cost to all Comcast subscribers. A standard installation fee would apply to all except qualified low income subscribers. Subs below a designated income level would receive totally free service.
Be nice is there was another cable choice instead of just one.
Being poor, I only want cable for internet service. Comcast has a monopoly on this. When I asked to have my TV cable turned off, they said my internet bill would go up. It did. Access to Local TV programming is very important to me, but affordable internet is critical.
Bellingham deserves better channel selections (more educational, like National Geographic) and a public access channel or two for locally produced programming.
Bellingham should open BTV10 to input by Whatcom County residents. It's Bellingham's control of BTV10 that's the problem not Comcast.
Bellingham should seek alternatives such as Verizon or WB Roadrunner. Comcast is the driving force behind those fighting net-neutrality. Cable TV WILL change in the next 10-15 years to a more internet-based, on-demand structure. Comcast, given recent legal proceedings, is trying to find ways to filter & restrict streaming video content. Their ideal future of the internet might not allow people to visit Hulu, Youtube etc unless users pay significantly more to access those particular type of websites. Bellingham will regret their contract unless they negotiate net neutrality now or bring in competitors who don't participate in these consumer-punishing tactics
Big concerns about the cost of their service. Verizon is offering the same package I have for \$89 per month. I pay Comcast \$139 per month. If Verizon were available I would switch to them
biggest complaint is customer service and being charged for repairs when it is their cable equipment and the problem not being corrected.
Bring in another option for us.
Broadcast tv is not my cup of tea. I want fast reliable internet service, and really want to know why it's \$15 per month in Blaine but over \$30 in B'ham. Also why City COuncil meetings are not streamed live so you don;t need cable to watch live. Comcast does a pretty good job delivering traditional cable but how about some creativity addressing what people in Bham really want. You shouldn;t have to subscribe to cable to get local community programming. We have an actual Tv station which has zero local programming - there is such a lack of imagination in KVOS management it's sad.
Bulk building rates for Senior/Disabled highrises are unfair, the individual cannot choose a cheaper (more limited) plan. Rates have been steadily increasing over last 5 years & will soon be unaffordable by many residents.
Cable from Comcast is expoenisive. I'd like to know how much profit they make every year. Also, I do not want to pay for sales channels. Not QVC or HSN I'm talking about where someone is sell me a juicer machine or special face cream.

General Survey Comments from Web-based survey- Responses for those stated that they live within City of Bellingham City limits
Cable is now used by the city and other government organizations as the primary means for communication. As a result it is quickly becoming a necessary service. As such it needs to be available and affordable for all citizens. The current price is too high to meet that need. The current channel selection is large but too inclusive. More selection is better. Finally a 15 year agreement in a technology service is a poor decision. Technology and community needs change too fast.
Comcast advised me that they had received complaints about spam being sent from my modem. I was not the source of the spam, but my attempts to get details from Comcast regarding the complaints were frustrating. They would not give me any details that would help me to understand what happened, or try to participate in eliminating the problem. After repeated questions from me, they finally acknowledged that the spam had stopped. I was concerned that my computer had been hacked, but Comcast was no help in determining how or when this might have happened.
Comcast cable TV goes out on a regular basis and is far too expensive. The only good comment I have for Comcast is that their cable internet is speedy and usually pretty reliable.
Comcast cables block views and should be placed underground. We are taxed on bay views and yet the view is seriously degraded by overhead utilities, TV, phone and power. Bellingham needs and undergrounding ordinance as many coastal communities have
comcast for at least the last 8 years has completely ignored and broken the FCC REGULATION concerning the audio volume during commercials. WITHOUT FAIL comcast jacks up the audio during ALL commercials by at least 3db.
Comcast has a monopoly; therefore, they can charge exorbitant fees with mediocre service.
Comcast has always been a great experience for me! Not everyone wants a satellite and the contract that goes with it. Please keep Comcast in Bellinghaam!
Comcast has been horrible. I am currently in the process of canceling my service with them.
Comcast has continually pulled channels from their basic package. I have probably lost 1/3 of my channels as they move them to digital cable. But the cost for basic cable has gone up in that time. I feel ripped off and am considering canceling.

General Survey Comments from Web-based survey- Responses for those stated that they live within City of Bellingham City limits
<p>Comcast has touted their improved On-Screen Program Guide and DVR Service (www.comcast.net/newguide/) for at least six months, and Customer Service has told me it would be available in Bellingham in January, and then April. It is still not available here in May.</p> <p>I want my Comcast DVR to be able to "...enter a search term today (ex: Eastwood, Clint) and your DVR can automatically search for and schedule recordings for programs relating to 'Clint Eastwood' as they're added to your program guide...". Instead, one must search out each individual future show of interest, and then set the DVR to record that individual show. It is almost impossible to know when all the shows in one's areas of interest are going to be broadcast in the future, so that one can go through the very cumbersome process of setting them to record. TiVo has had the automatic search and record capability for many years.</p> <p>It is past time for Comcast to introduce this and the other features described on their website referenced above.</p>
Comcast internet service is more important to us than television service.
Comcast is a monopoly and Un-American, that being said I've never had a problem w/ customer service or signal. It's just too damn expensive for the lower class. I'm thinking of canceling now to save money.
Comcast is a monopoly we are forced to use in my area. I HATE on demand - you wait 5 seconds to change channels then 3 more seconds of it flashing NOT AUTHORIZED. The cost is OUTRAGEOUS and they ALWAYS charge way more than they say they will. They have no discount for pensioners and those living on a very small income. My bill goes from somewhere between \$70/mo and \$179/mo and I don't know why. It's a blatant OUTRAGE! Something needs to be done about this. I wish I did not have to use Comcast.
Comcast is actively opposing "Net Neutrality" on a national level so to create an information plutocracy shared with a few other cable providers. I encourage Bellingham to find another cable vendor so to thwart the advent information plutocracy.
Comcast is the WORST company I have ever had to deal with. I hate that they have a monopoly, because they use it to treat their customers like shit. I have never been treated worse by a company, and never had to call and fix my bill more times than I have with Comcast. I have never spoken to two Comcast employees who gave me the same answer to my question. They cheat, lie, and steal and I fucking hate this company. I HOPE YOU GO BANKRUPT YOU SLIMEY THIEVES!
Comcast is way too expensive.
Comcast limits internet streaming to force customers to purchase cable television (such as Netflix) we will terminate our relationship with Comcast as soon as other quality internet is available.
Comcast needs to have better prices. They charge too much money and don't offer fair pricing.
Comcast needs to staff the Bellingham Studio once again. The production staff that was once employed there provided many local originated programs for On-Demand service. As one of Comcast's many cutbacks, the production staff was eliminated and the majority of local origination programming has ended. Please urge Comcast to restore this valuable service.

General Survey Comments from Web-based survey- Responses for those stated that they live within City of Bellingham City limits
Comcast offers too few package options and basically tried to force you into one of its most expensive packages. The basic cable package has too few stations; the next one is too expensive. This is what you get with a monopoly.
Comcast provides excellent service for my TV. my computer and my phone.
Comcast should advertise their lowest tier cable, internet, & phone rates. Right now you have to ask to find out.
Comcast used to produce a small amount of local programming, but now does nothing. If the franchise agreement does not specify a minimum amount of such service, it should. And it should be available to ALL subscribers, not limited to those with set top tuners, which only adds to Comcast's bottom line. Note: Public Access is a total waste of time and resources; don't get sucked into that trap.
Comcast uses an 800 number for their customer service. It's not even worth calling once you've called it a couple of times. Customer service knows next to nothing about any problems in service interruptions, about half the time they don't even know there is one. I assume (I don't really know if that is the case, but they happen frequent enough that it would be scary if it was bad equipment) that many of the interruptions are planned, but there is no notice given,
Comcast uses stock rerun programs on all their channels that is now over 75%. I think this is a rip-off for consumers. If they intend to raise rates then Comcast needs to have new and intelligent programming. I would like more PBS programs from San Francisco KQED and Boston. CNN & HN are a joke, not news anymore but a talk show format with personality overload for announcers.
comcast was too expensive for me for the number of channels avail with "real" tv I don't consider shopping channels or religious channels to be real entertainment so I am switching tomorrow to the dish
Community based channels!!
Company says they will fix problems with bill and its been a year an still not fixed. Company claims they will call back with answers to problems and never do.
Currently, there is no public cable access channel in Bellingham, Washington. We feel that in a city with a thriving university, a strong government cable access channel, and a host of events and groups worthy of video coverage, that the time has come for us citizens to create one. 75 folks think so and have joined the Public Cable Access in Bellingham, WA Facebook group at http://www.facebook.com/#!/group.php?gid=119316851437115 By the way, I do not believe this issue was given enough weight in the development of this survey. Even though the City Councilor Stan Snapp was tasked to work on the Cable Franchise and Public Access Channel (2010 only), no direct questions were asked about access of any type, much less public access interest.
Digital cable "Freeze" almost daily since the last upgrade lasting up to several hours without picture & Sound; Also digital sound "off sync" with picture DAILY
DO NOT do a 15 year contract renewal. Technology is changing far too fast to be skackled with a 15 year contract. No more than 5 years, please!

General Survey Comments from Web-based survey- Responses for those stated that they live within City of Bellingham City limits
Even with basic cable we end up paying for numerous channels we don't watch.
Every other region of the country I visit has the Science Channel and Syfy as standard channels. For some reason, they are considered "premium" here, which I find silly. Remove one of the many sports or junk-selling channels and add these two.
Excellent service at a fair price. Very satisfied.
Feels like a monopoly of television/internet services
Fine with me. Do not open BTV-10 to community/neighborhood/special interest groups. Stick to governmental programming. I believe Channel 26 can be used by community groups if Comcast agrees.
for question 21, I only want expanded programming or channel capacity if it means offering more with no increase in fee. The basic service is too expensive. the cost of the second level of service jumps way too high. Basic should offer more for the same cost it is now, or less. We are all being ripped off.
get them to give you a commitment to net neutrality.
Have had problems with getting wrong equipment or faulty equipment (HD set top boxes) three separate times. Very frustrated with this aspect!
Having cable service was ultimately not worth the expense. Our television was rarely on, so the amount it cost each month was just too much. If we had the option to subscribe to just certain channels (making cost more congruent with our usage), perhaps with pay-per-view options on others, we'd be far more likely to subscribe again.
how come there is no public station in bellingham like in other cities where i've lived? i love those goofy shows and i love to see local programs about music scene.
How come they keep taking channels out of basic? How come their local channel 10 stopped making Inside Bellingham? I want local programming and channel 12 and 10 are all we have. Since I don't watch reruns of MASH I don't watch channel 12 much. I want channel 10 to make more local programs. I like the meetings but I need some real TV like Bellingham news and weather and a talk show and a movie reviewer and a restaurant reviewer and local college sports would be fun. I can't believe we don't have that. Channel 10 is so serious. Bellinghamsters have a great sense of humor. Our TV channel should reflect that.
I am a senior citizen and home 95% of the time, I am disapointed in all the 'paid programs' hours of that and all the reruns over and over 'how many times can you watch 'law and order and CSI'the movies don't even start on AMC until 10am and the movies are over and over the same ones....would you consider adding another cable company such as CABLE AMERICA -- Thank you
I am extremely upset with the number of "paid programs" advertising all sorts of scams. On Saturdays and Sundays that is all that is on the TV!
I am mostly unhappy with the bundled packages comcast offers. I'd rather buy the few channels I actually want at a lower cost. I wish they would carry CHEK TV an other local Canadian stations.

General Survey Comments from Web-based survey- Responses for those stated that they live within City of Bellingham City limits
<p>I am so angry with Comcast. When HD tv started we swapped out our old tv's and bought all HD's. I just got back from winter in AZ to find out that it is going to cost me a fortune if I want to have hd service on all my tv's. I have 5 and it would be \$6 something for the first box and \$12 something for each additional box. That would be at least \$60. more a month just so I can use my tv's for what they were designed. I think this is just extortion. I have the bundled service, I only have the extended basic, only one tv on hd and my bill this month was \$180.00. That is just outrageous. I am looking at Direct TV, is there any other cable company that could do this and maybe do it without taking all our money.</p>
<p>I do not like Comcast's monopoly on cable television, especially their monopoly on Internet broadband cable services. We need increased competition!</p>
<p>I do not, and I repeat NOT want to see Comcast drop their customer service once we get this contract going. Their customer service and service overall is extremely poor, although their products are good, especially the internet.</p>
<p>I don't know if Comcast is better or worse in terms of channels and variety than any other cable company. What I know is that their phone service sucks. I also know they are expensive. I pay more for Comcast in Bellingham than my folks pay in Spokane for the same channels.</p>
<p>I don't understand why the bill keeps going up faster than prices in general. All I want is CNBC, Fox Business, and Bloomberg, but I have to buy a premium service with all sorts of other junk to get what I want.</p>
<p>I experience 'pixilated' and/or 'lost signal' too frequently.</p>
<p>I feel that locking into an exclusive deal with a content provider doesn't allow for the growth that can occur with competition. Comcast is the only game in town for non-satellite television and you can see it in their prices and service offered.</p>
<p>I feel the cable service has got so high in price that a majority of the the citizens in the whatcom county area have been over charged for the basic services. Internet is fifty dollars then phone service and then the starter package. that comes to be over \$130.00 for the basics. They advertise it as bundle with comcast for \$99.00 a month. Well add 1/3 more for taxes. I dont know of any one that I know that is low income or middle class that can afford that price. You might as well spend that on a car payment.</p> <p>Michael Peterson 655 Telegraph Road Bellingham</p>
<p>I feel There pricing plans are deceptive and when iquiring as to them, dishonest.</p>

General Survey Comments from Web-based survey- Responses for those stated that they live within City of Bellingham City limits
<p>I find the whole Comcast pricing and package offerings difficult to understand. Pricing seems to change constantly, so you never no what you are paying for that could be cheaper. The website and the Comcast bill are very difficult to fathom. Basically, I think that Comcast clouds their offerings in order to force us to buy service we don't want. We also have phone and internet from Comcast so we do get some discount. What we would really like is to choose the channels we have access to and still have the ability to have HD service. One should be able to choose a basic, Seattle-local channel only with HD service package. We do not need, nor do we watch all the 100s of other extra channels. Also, the channel guide should only list the channels one currently subscribes to - why do I have to "wade through" all the other channels?</p>
<p>I gave up cable in 2005, didn't re-up until this Winter's Olympics. I've been frustrated with Comcast because: A) they did not activate all the sites I requested; B) billed me for service I specifically said I did NOT want; C) when I called to try to straighten things out, got a very chatty (pleasant) person but no real verification that the issues had been resolved.</p>
<p>I had to deal with comcast several time over the last six months to set up cable service in my name and never once in about 10 either online or over the phone converstations were they able to help me even the technician that came to set it up was confused by their instructions and write up they provided him. The only good customer service I received was from the company they contracted with to be one of their service providers to install my cable service. I was amazed at how unprofessional and uncourteous they were but as they said what choice do I have since they are they only cable provider in town other than sattelite service. They made it clear they had a monopoly on the cable service available to Bellingham residents and there wasn't much we could do. I have to say it's bad enough to know this but to have the company point it out to me and feel they don't have to be customer service oriented because of it is down right wrong. It's time for some competition for Comcast, to bring them back to what matters most, providing good service at reasonable prices without attitude.</p>
<p>I hate their customer service phone tree. Its a horrible service. I can't think of another service utility that has ever been that bad. Even Qwest offers better and more personal service than Comcast. Please fix it.</p>
<p>I have been pleased with the quality of Comcast's service. They seem to be attentive to service problems. I am not too happy with the curently expensive and ever increasing cost of Comcast's service. Whatever COB's negotiation brings, I strongly hope it will not result in a rate increase to the consumers.</p>
<p>I have DirecTV- after being fed up with Comcast's rates rising, poor service, and more channels, at better price, offered by DirecTV. So, given this alternative, feel free to extract a higher franchise fee or benefit from Comcast for this renewall if you approve it. The only drawback is that DirecTV does not get B-TV or channel 10</p>
<p>I have had dish network in the past and their customer service was terrible. The comcast techs who visit my house are friendly and smart and get the job done well.</p>

General Survey Comments from Web-based survey- Responses for those stated that they live within City of Bellingham City limits
<p>I no longer use any television service because I don't like that I can't pick what channels I want. I want just a few channels, but the one I want the most is in the MOST EXPENSIVE PACKAGE, meaning I have to pay for hundreds of channels to watch a few. It's absurd and I'm not going to give them money for that. It's also unfortunate that Comcast has no real competition here.</p> <p>I am, however, EXTREMELY happy with the reliability and speed of Comcast's high-speed Internet (since Google Fiber isn't here yet, anyway...), and would never wish for that to go away.</p>
<p>I pay for over 100 channels and watch regularly like 8 of them ! Not fair. Why am I paying for 24 hr shopping channels and religious crap ?</p>
<p>I pay for too many chanel I neither need or want</p>
<p>I really do not understand why the city makes a contract with a single cable company. It prevents competition between other companies and leaves residence stuck with no options. If you make a contract with Comcast why not add a clause that protect consumer by preventing the unjustified fluxuations in monthly cost, and that would allow residents to set up annual-2y. contracts with guaranteed rates?</p>
<p>I really don't appreciate the jump in digital cable price after about 6 months, its the same service so why should it go from \$65 to \$165?</p>
<p>I really think a decent worldwide news channel, such as CNN (NOT FOX) should be part of the basic cable.</p>
<p>I regret very much having to pay for television broadcasts, which I believe should be free to the public.</p>
<p>I stay with cable because of the Canadian channels. As far as I know the satellite services don't offer Canadian stations.</p>
<p>I think people complain about their prices but they do not compare apples to apples. They have cheaper rates for less services. And they have high speed internet, the fastest. And bundle with the phone and all three are less than Qwest</p>
<p>I think that discounts should also be approved for students. All students need access to the internet and the cost of basic TV service & internet are too expensive.</p>
<p>I think they are taking advantage of the fact that they are the only providers to provide all 3 services(TV,phone and internet).Their rates are different if you choose just one which I think is very unfair.But for the internet I wouldn't go with comcast.</p>
<p>I ued to live in Seattle and the phone call service was much better there. Comcast doesn't seem to care about service once they have you signed up. If you want to get fast service here you have to press the button for wanting new services. Then they answer the phone quickly.</p>
<p>I want ala carte programming. I do not want 3 shopping channels. I do not want half of what is offered by comcast.I</p>
<p>I want Speed channel. I really don't know why we have the golf network instead but I hate it!</p>
<p>I want to see the BBC.</p>

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I was given misinformation over the phone, and representative gave incorrect address for me to visit the local office. Phone book was no help. Local office said I shouldn't have come to local office - no of channels reduction was intended to be reduced with technology upgrade. Number of channels received on basic cable have been reduced while price increased. I'm seriously considering dropping all cable television.
I will be sending a letter to the City Council as this area does not have adequate space for me to make comments.
I wish there was competition, in So. California there is COX cable at lower prices
I would like to be able to choose which channels I want to pay for. As it is now 90% of the programming is of no interest to me. I very seldom want to watch anything except KCTS- PBS - Public Broadcast channel(s)
I would like to buy channel access on my terms, not Comcast's. We would to see more variety of channel packages available at lower costs. Currently, the lower cost package consists of a number of shopping channels. Please get rid of those in this package, and offer programming that has entertainment value such as TLC & movie type programming.
I would like to choose my channels. To receive the channels I prefer I must buy the extended basic package but only watch about a tenth of the channels
I would like to have "a la carte" pricing. I do not watch most of the channel that I have. If I drop the Digital Cable plan for just Limited Cable I loose a few channels that are favorites.
I would like to have the choice of varied program packages instead of being locked into their choice of program packages.
I would like to purchase only a few channels, on a pay-per-channel type plan. I don't want any of the huge packages offered as "choices".
I would like to see improved technologies that would help me control my monthly costs. I would pay for a basic package and then a per channel cost for some specific channels of high interest that are now only offered in the most expensive plan. Also, I do not want to spend my \$\$ on public access television, I had it in the past and the quality was poor. I would like to see more election issue coverage and education coverage. Local school issues should be covered and aren't.
i would really like to pay only for those channels i want. (ala-carte pricing)
Id go back to comcast if they had good service
I'd like to see them no longer be a total monopoly. It's unjust and unfair. Too expensive as well.
If you are a mult family how can you give one age range (regarding #24) Cable costs too much & offers less quaulity programing. There is so much repeat program.On demand only offers on demand if you are part of the HBO< STARZ< TMC etc. They advertise it as though you can watch anything but you can't.

General Survey Comments from Web-based survey- Responses for those stated that they live within City of Bellingham City limits
In this area, Comcast has excellent customer service & tech support. I feel that comes at an expense and I wish there was more competition for cable service in this area. I find Comcast to be very expensive.
internet connection very high cost.
It is challenging to use the phone tree to find out the address of the local cable office.
It is ridiculously over-priced. I have to pay for hundreds of channels I never use in order to get the ones I want. I want Comcast to provide a menu of options in order to have more personalized service, at a lower price.
It would be nice to be able to choose the channels in my package rather than having to take the Comcast package. Much of what they offer is of no interest to me but I am forced to pay for it anyway.
It would be nice to have a choice of companies. There should be a free option for only local/noncommercial TV programming.
It's the only game in town, I spent 3 years in Tokyo, Japan - I had 100 MBPS at the house for \$11.00 dollars a month... That included basic cable and phone service. I think Comcast is way over priced for what you get....
It's too expensive with too many tiers of service. I feel like I'm paying \$\$\$\$ for commercials. I'm stuck with Comcast because forests keep me from receiving satellite service, but if I could get satellite, I would in a heartbeat.
Just to clarify (because question 8 was alarming)I think EVERYBODY should have the option of Limited Basic Cable. Add'l discounts for Senior Citizens and the Disabled sounds appropriate.
Lack of competition means higher prices for customers. New customers get deals to sign up while existing customers have no options.
Like the fact that telephone, cable and high speed internet access are available from one vendor. I am more interested in the high speed internet access than the cable TV.
Local Comcast office is not necessary if they would provide free packing materials and shipping for returning equipment. Might save them on labor and rent expenses. We would like to see all of the franchise fees go to the government channel or be removed from the franchise agreement. This seems like yet another tax on residents. Up the sales tax if we need more funding for government operations, but don't selectively tax cable subscribers. The interface for navigating content and scheduling DVR functions is really clunky and not very responsive. Would love to see improvements in this area.
Lower the cost all else doesn't matter
More community based and produced access channels. The ability for properly trained citizens to rent equipment and produce shows for airing is sorely lacking in this vibrant community.
More HD wanted. And we need a second local channel for local content creators.
More HD, smaller ads in guide, too expensive even with "triple" service, better free on-demand selection, more current programming on on-demand (no Lost reruns? Really?)

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my main complaint is the 7 to 10% cost increase/yr over the past 5 years when inflation has been low.
My wife and I have been satisfied with our TV, internet and "telephone" service from Comcast
need more channels geared towards young kids (toddler/preschool age). Sprout was taken away from us and now we only have Disney and PBS, neither of which offer all day options for young children. My 4 year old does not need to be watching Hannah Montana! :)
Need more community programming. I'd move to satellite if they had TV10. Need to fix their phone system so you can get a real person in a short amount of time. Very frustrating when calling them.
Not enough choices in bundles. To get HD and other services you are forced to buy premium stations you do not want.
not enough education and serious political discussion with local people. not DC hacks and stooges. need more 3rd party views
Not enough inexpensive options. Lots of options at over \$50.
Not happy that many analog channels were removed with the switch over to Digital. Now each TV has to have a box and the main reason I had cable was to eliminate boxes. Problem is we have a number of TVs and Comcast only gives you a couple boxes before charging for the box (they should eat this cost). I also used my PC mainly with a cable tuner card. Now I can only get a couple channels, makes my PC card almost useless. I'm almost ready to drop cable totally and just use the internet for TV viewing.
Not so much Comcast, but BTV-10: It really needs to be more of a Community Channel, not just a City of Bellingham departmental PR/backslapping outlet. How about some Port of Bellingham, Neighborhood Association and Merchant Association coverage?
Notorious for baiting public with offers of new or additional services at entry price, only to turn around and jack the price up once they have you committed! There is not enough competition of cable carriers to make Comcast competitive in Bellingham!!
Once last year the cable service went out and it took them 3 days to get it back. This was in summer and they never even gave me a refund for the outage. You can't call them to complain because you'll never get a real person. That recorded sales message is loud and very irritating.
Once they quote you a price it should be good for as long as you keep Comcast's cable. These promotions that last a year and end is when they sock it to you without notifying you sucks.
Other than bolting a dish onto the side of the house, Comcast has a monopoly on cable TV. A Google style network that allows competition would be beneficial to promoting competition.
Other than the price - We have been very happy with Comcast.
Our experience has been poor. The customer service people are rude and difficult to understand. The rates are too expensive and now you're required to pay for a box for every TV you have in order to get service. The boxes are cheaply built and frequently malfunction/need replacement. When you need service, Comcast automatically assumes the problem is your fault and tells you they will charge you accordingly. They need competition.

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over the past 2 years, although i havn't changed my service, my bill has "crept up" in price. this is on top of price increases that they have advertised. most people wouldn't really know if they were not looking for it. comcast is a rip-off.
<p>Personally I am not happy with the near Monopoly status that Comcast has over Internet and Cable. Comcast's stance against Net Neutrality in particular are troubling.</p> <p>I would prefer to support a company that provide more ala-cart programming. For example, ESPN is a major expense of the cable companies. Allow people to opt-out of that part of the service.</p> <p>The aggressive door to door sales people for their internet services are particularly misleading and annoying.</p>
Please allow for competition.
Price is the biggest drawback, as in equipment that is not as advanced as it could be. I'm far more impressed with Direct Tv's customer interface and value for money since I switched. I would never go back.
Prices are completely out of control. Only option for us is sat and they are crooks
Rate increases without warning. Refuse to allow a lower cost plan until high cost plan is paid in full so you can't catch up
<p>Rates increase all to often. The change to digital was not seamless as was advertised.</p> <p>Instructions to set up digital boxes were inaccurate so technician was sent. Advertised special are not available to existing customers.</p>
<p>reruns all the time</p> <p>sound/picture not good on some channels</p> <p>taxes are a lot on my bill</p> <p>seniors should have lower rates</p> <p>programs are not that good and shown over and over. Same kind of shows over and over.</p>
Service is abysmal and overpriced. Troubleshooting on frequent occasions when service is not working is extremely time-consuming. Bellingham needs competitor cable company to Comcast. (Dish signals can't reach my home.)
should not have to pay for so many cable channels, many very low value, over paid entertainers, need choices. Do not want offensive, dumb programming on community access channels
So let me get this straight - the City right of way, owned by the City and therefore by the tax payers, will be leased to Comcast. Then Comcast will turn around and increase our rates, so the taxpayers are effectively paying for their use of our right of way. That doesn't seem to make any sense does it?
sound fluctuation on channels, inferior programming, constant reruns of movies-some movies run over and over 3-5 times in a week. I am not a fan of government channels. They just lie anyway.

General Survey Comments from Web-based survey- Responses for those stated that they live within City of Bellingham City limits
Subscribed to Basic cable when we needed to. Now upgraded to Preferred cable, but now the DTA's (small adapter boxes) "don't" receive the upgraded service, so I'm forced to rent the more expensive boxes to receive service. Feed cheated by Comcast.
Suddenly this spring, in order to be able to view our local sport team, i.e., the Mariners and Seahawks, we are required to purchase a more expensive package from Comcast. In this time of recession, when struggling families have little extra money, Comcast is holding our small pleasures for ransom. I don't suppose this is one of the issues local (or even state or federal) governments can do anything about?
The basic service and the digital service which allows you to see shows at later times is too expensive for what they are providing. They add it on as an extra service so they can charge more. If Bellingham has the chance to let a cheaper company in, they should. Also, when speaking with Comcast and talking about how expensive it is, they use the separation of the products almost as a reason why it needs to be so expensive. Also, though they say they don't charge for the channels, I think subscribers should be given the option of whether they really want, for example, 20 sports channels, Korean channels, etc. They act as if it's a good thing all those are in the "package" but they don't even understand what a scam it is.
The channels that we receive are mostly of awful content. We would like to see more family friendly 'G' rated programming, even old reruns would be great!
The cost is too prohibitive and goes up without notification so we are seeking other ways to get entertainment such as netflix.
The customer service is the worst I have ever experienced.
The fact that the office is not open on weekends is extremely inconvenient when both people in our household work Monday through Friday.
The issue with Comcast is that they are charging more than competing agencies for less channels. They don't offer the programming of say Direct TV and their prices are outrageous. Their customer service is pretty good, but it doesn't make up for the lack of programming. They don't have as many features, and the only time they have good prices is for new members and the good prices only last 6-12 months and then the price shoots way up; and if you have been with them for over a year or more, you don't have any opportunity at all to save money because all their good deals are all geared towards getting new subscribers.
The largest problem I had with Comcast was in relation to their internet service. In the past they had an unpublished "cap" on the amount of bandwidth you could use, and target there highest users, suspending (without proper notice) and then canceling service. When trying to understand why we were having service interruptions they were rude, accusatory and provided blatantly false information.
The monopoly of public cable is outrageous. As there are no other choices for cable I cannot judge the service, quality or PRICE. I don't know how this survey on service and quality can be of much use if there is no comparison or competition. My answers are primarily in the satisfied column because I have no other experience.

General Survey Comments from Web-based survey- Responses for those stated that they live within City of Bellingham City limits
<p>The price goes up every couple of monthes as short lived proms expire,this is a pain to deal with. The services are always breaking down requiring constant calls to friendly but inept service people. They don't give cheaper services to people who qualify for assistance. Having service people come to house is all about the convienience of the company, and miserable for the person needing work and have repairs done. Many subsequent repair calls, at least 10 have not fixed my phone from cutting out in the middle of really important calls. I hate this company more than any I have ever had services from!</p>
<p>The price seems to go up alittle every month, I pay too much for a phone I never use. Actually I have been thinking about cancelling the phone and the TV</p>
<p>The prices are way too high and I don't like how you are pretty much forced into buying cable and internet together because the price to bundle them is close to the same price.</p>
<p>The prices are way too high, with not enough granularity in the channel selection (I am forced to pay for hundreds of channels I don't use, instead of just the 20 or so I do).</p> <p>Their web site is one of the worst I have ever seen, for a major company. Totally user unfriendly and worthless.</p> <p>Their program guide functionality is bad, with only two minor 'upgrades' in the last five years.</p>
<p>The reason I don't have cable is the cost of Comcast cable is prohibitively high. I feel if there was a second company in bellingham that offered competition, it might lower cost of cable. It is not worth having when I can watch the shows I am interested in seeing online.</p>
<p>The selection for the 2nd tier is too high in shopping channels. Should include C-span 3 and one or two more drama channels.</p>
<p>The service is terrible and the price is exorbitant.</p>
<p>Their Digital converter box for second non-cable box televisions is horrible. So is the picture on that TV. IF the signal is degraded at all it is not viewable wheras before you could see the picture but with some fuzz - which is better than nothing at all. DVR is slow compared to Tivo.</p>
<p>Their service costs are too high and deceptive. The bill you receive changes with no explanation and is never what you were quoted. You have to go through your bill thoroughly each month to make sure you were not overcharged, then spend too much time on the phone getting errors resolved. The internet service sets arbitrary limits on how much data you can transmit/receive.</p>
<p>There are too many commercials. When cable first came into existence it was touted as commercial free. Then the greed took over and now not only must I pay for subscription but I must sit through too many commercials. At some point it becomes abusive.</p>
<p>They are a monopoly and as such are completely over priced. My "connection" is interrupted often and it takes a long time to reboot and I lose large amounts of show dialogue. They had a new option to increase speed on internet and nothing changed except a higher bill. They are very polite thieves.</p>
<p>They are too expensive...We should have options where they have to compete so we get lower prices - why should they lower prices if they have a monopoly on Bellingham?</p>
<p>They increase the audio volumn during commercials. I don't like this at all.</p>

General Survey Comments from Web-based survey- Responses for those stated that they live within City of Bellingham City limits
They need to discontinue "Regulatory Recovery Fees" because that is not a tax or government charge..it is just an extra fee for Comcast's profit. The phone equipment charge should be part of the fee for telephone service, not an additional fee. There needs to be another cable provider in B'Ham because Comcast is turning into a monopoly and we are at it's mercy if we want cable television. I live in a building that does not allow satellite dishes.
They suck
They've taken away 5 channels, but we pay the same.
This survey doesn't address internet connections. We use Comcast for internet at home and business. We don't watch t.v.
to expensive, no other choices, needing equipment to have just basic cable. Wrong forced me to spend more money to keep the channels I all ready had.
to much mtv. stop the sales like qvc. etc. etc.
Too expensive
Too expensive not enough HD channels, or the HD channels are in east coast time zone.
Too expensive. No sound on certain channels that I'm paying for.
too many add on boxes for basic service
too much bundling of worthless channels, pricing should be a la carte per channel. Secure pricing for life of contract not yearly increases like they get away with now
Variety and quality of channels available frustrating.....too many repetitive movies and reruns, shopping channels and commercial paid programming. Would like to see Sundance channel and National Geographic channel offered. Rates for what you get way too high.
Very expensive! Don't allow lower price for seniors on fixed incomes or individuals with lower incomes. Don't allow individuals to have some choice of channels they want. Again, Very expensive! They have monopoly and Bellingham should complain about the price.
Very poor quality of services for the cost. Billing & access to internet site inaccurate, inefficient, inconvenient and very frustrating!
VERY UNSATISFIED with Comcast technologies since the November 2009 rollover to digistal programming. My VCR operation is limited; Comcast remote control is sluggish; picture is cropped.
volume on some cable stations is poor quality and commercials too loud.
We don't use 2/3 of the channels offered yet we have to pay for them to get one or two of the channels not offered in Basic. The only reason we keep cable is my husband, I would prefer to drop it. It's a waste of money for what channels we use.

General Survey Comments from Web-based survey- Responses for those stated that they live within City of Bellingham City limits
<p>We have lived in coastal Maine, northern Minnesota, eastern Washington and western Michigan, and this is the first place we've lived that does not have its own major network affiliate with local news and weather; i don't subscribe to cable here because i don't need to know all about what's going on in Seattle. i'm amazed that Bellingham has such poor local news availability.</p>
<p>We have Tivo and Comcast really messed up our Tivo services, channels don't record, sound is terrible, can't record more than 1 program at a time on channels over #30. We not very interested in helping fix problems, feel they wanted us to use Comcast DVR, for a fee of course. And they offer a bunch of stations we don't watch but have to pay for.</p>
<p>We live just between South and Samish neighborhoods. We've called many times since moving in and have been told that Comcast has "no intention of bringing their lines out here"-- two Comcast employees manning the Comcast desk at the Whatcom County Home Show actually told us that Comcast barely had the money to stay open, let alone carry their lines out to our neighborhood. I was under the impression that Comcast's charter meant it was supposed to serve ALL the people of Bellingham (including all of Bellingham's neighborhoods). If they didn't have such a monopoly here I wouldn't mind...but folks out here can only have Satellite TV and Internet and NONE of us are happy with it! They could have so much more business (i.e. revenue) and we could have the services we deserve if they would just extend out here. If they can't serve ALL of us, then their compact should be either voided or it shouldn't be the only one in town. Bellingham needs to seek out other companies who WILL serve this city in its entirety and not just some of the residents. Either make Comcast serve the city (all the city) properly or kiss them goodbye!</p>
<p>We need a second option! Comcast has a monopoly on cable/internet in Bellingham and the act like it!</p>
<p>We need a second public station for locally produced, local news. Another option is to convert BTV 10 to PEG TV such as folks in Olympia and Yakima have enjoyed for years.</p>
<p>We need competition. Price is outrageous</p>
<p>We need more local programming. KVOs and BTV10 are the only local broadcasters in town and neither cover much in the way of local culture. KVOs is on the brink of bankruptcy I guess. So I understand why they don't have money for local informational programs. But what about BTV10. I thought money from subscribers paid for that station. If that's the case then we are not getting our money's worth. All we get is government programming. I value open government as much as anyone. But where is the community programming? Where is the music, art, culture, special events, interesting speakers from campus???? As a Comcast subscriber and part "owner" of BTV10 I want more community programming. I expect BTV10 to take up some local issues. There is so much more that station could be doing to inform and define our community. Video is a valuable and impactful medium. We need a community voice. Please give it to us.</p>
<p>We need to bring back Local programming, the local Community Access Studio with equipment to make local shows and cover events like the Ski to Sea Race.</p>
<p>We would like the a la carte option to pick other cable channels, for example: Fox business; and National geographic.</p>

General Survey Comments from Web-based survey- Responses for those stated that they live within City of Bellingham City limits
We would like to have the ARTS channel, now seen periodically on channel 26, be a 24 hour feed. It is free. It is currently interrupted by announcements that should be on channel 10 or not shown at all because they are advertisements. When people know this ARTS channel is available, they love to watch it - especially people confined due to illness, as my husband is. If they tune in to channel 26 and find an advertisement, or other uninteresting program, they tune out and do not know this free feed is available.
We're frustrated with reduction of channels and increase of monthly charges.
What's important to me is cost. Its more than an average person in Bellingham can afford. I have a job that pays \$9 an hour plus tips. How can I even begin to consider spending \$50 a month for cable when my phone, my water, my garbage and my taxes must be paid? I tried the base service and the channel selection was terrible. If they had a decent selection of channels on the base than I might go for it. I'd rather watch videos on DVD.
While I do not use Comcast for television-the prices are outrageous-we use Comcast for internet because there are no alternatives. Other choices for other services should be available.
Why can't we have CSPAN-2 & CSPAN-3 as part of Basic Plan; it is sponsored by Cable Companies?
Why Comcast? Is it possible to have 2-3 cable companies. Comcast has monopoly in Bellingham, and why they are going to renew the contract? They pay the most?
Why do I hate Comcast? I even get along with the phone company.
Would be great if customers could use their own equipment/DVRs with Comcast. Folks at Comcast office not helpful----refer you to telephone for problems. Seems all they do is bills & equipment exchange.
Would like a \$25 plan that would have a lot less Channels available. Maybe Channels 4, 5, 7, four optional channels of our choice.
would like to pick the channels I want. Or pay by the number of channels I want.
Would like to see more channels in HD and have the time shown on HD stations to reflect an area closer to where we live. (Currently all HD programming is east coast time, so if a program is supposed to be shown at 8pm on regular SD cable, it is shown at 5pm on the HD cable, before I can get home.) I like having the HD earlier so I have more chances to watch it, but only an hour earlier would be preferred.
Would love to have an option to only pay for the channels you want.
Yes, they might be slightly pricey, but overall I have always had a good experience with comcast.
You should be able to just pay for the chanel you want. 500 channels with nothing to watch! I would only want the science, discovery, PBS, History, learning channels

General Survey Comments from Web-based survey- Responses for those stated that they live within City of Bellingham City limits

Your survey missed the central issue for Bellingham residents as citizens: Basic cable (made law by Congress) has been gutted of national news -- to get it we must buy a higher tier of cable. Basic cable in Bellingham should require all the national 24-hour news channel (don't let them give us Fox Views only).

This is our ONLY chance to do this -- please listen to this special need (I teach about mass media at the university level and know a bit about these things). Thanks.

Table 15: Web-based Survey – Open-ended comments from respondents outside of City

General Survey Comments from Web-based survey - Responses for those stated that they live outside City of Bellingham City limits

Although Comcast cable service is far too expensive, the quality of customer service has been excellent. The quality of equipment (DVR's) has been exceptionally poor. Local community broadcast time should be reduced, not expanded.

As the only provided in the area the prices are less than competitive. They also charge for many things per tv which other cable companies do not do.

Basic cable is filled with many channels I don't watch. I would like the ability to choose two to three more channels. Consider adding History channel, ESPN, Comedy Central. I watch less and less of tv news (lack of serious journalism), reality shows, poor program quality. Most of series are beginning in January ending in May. Why have cable in the other months. I am considering going to Hulu.

Basic cable should include ESPN and a few more movie channels.

Been having problems with on demand options for about 4 months. Tech acknowledges problem exists but unable to do anything about it unless they can be here when problem is actually happening. Problem is intermittent so problem still exists. Very frustrating. Either they offer on demand or they don't. Which is it?

Cable available one street away, but not on our street (Chuckanut Point Rd). Would surely like the chance to try cable.

Chuckanut Point Road should have cable and internet service available.

Comcast does not have a LOCAL phone number any more. I pay \$60.15 per month for BASIC and EXPANDED BASIC. That is \$2.00 per day for a senior citizen! When you call COMCAST you have to push 5 buttons for the first response, 4 buttons for the second response and 9 for Spanish. What ever happened to the person who answered the phone without all of the pushing of buttons? The push buttons never seem to apply to MY problem!

General Survey Comments from Web-based survey - Responses for those stated that they live outside City of Bellingham City limits
Comcast has no competition and can charge whatever they want and keep people tied up in an expensive plan when they could allow packaging of channels with transparency and economic factors, give price breaks for those customers whom have hung in there even with the 6 price hikes in the last few years. How come other areas can get the same service for less money. We may be a smaller area we can be valuable customers if treated well. think about it...quit giving employees total free packages and forcing us to pay.
Comcast is a complete rip off. They frequently up your bill without informing you first, mess up your bill and they charge WAY TOO MUCH! They are the most expensive cable/internet provider I have ever seen.
Comcast provides many more stations in its expanded service in other parts of the country at the same price we pay here. We need competition in this area (besides dishes) to keep the rates more stable. Bills seem to increase on a monthly basis.
Comply with the intent of federal law requiring the CTV provider to "broadcast" the basic HD channels over cable WITHOUT the need for the digital cable box.
Experiencing repeated billing errors where services that were cancelled are still billed for.
For being the only choice for TV service in the area, I think Comcast does an outstanding job providing service and programming to Bellingham. If there were other choice I think they would be just as good,
have had 2 times when the technician came out, and both were scheduling glitches. We got double-booked the first time, but the issue was fixed easily. The second time the technician came in the morning when we'd requested afternoon, so we were unprepared and sent them away. Never got a call back from them. We've had the digital boxes malfunction several times. Most of the time it was a quick fix on my part, switching boxes, or flipping a switch a few times. I got tired of relying on customer service's scheduling. Their cost is too high for the quality we get, and I'd like to have the ability to choose what stations we want, while eliminating others for a better price.
I am extremely annoyed by decreased channel availability for basic cable. Channels are taken away with no warning or reduction of fees. During the past year we have lost a significant number of channels and were denied conversion boxes because we were on basic cable. Since first signing up for cable when it first came to Bellingham my rates have increased much more than the rate of inflation, service has diminished. I feel that Comcast has abused their public trust and obligation; even as a monopoly. Get rid of them.
I am very UNHAPPY regarding the continual increases in cost of my services. Since I first subscribed to Comcast, 6 years ago, my services my service costs have doubled. I don't understand how they can charge that much more when they aren't providing any new services or equipment for me. I live just outside the city limits (about a block away by the airport), and I don't want the city to be denied the funds they can get from this contract, but I am tired of feel violated everytime I open my cable bill. I am about to look into satellite TV.
I HATE the 2-year contract and bait and switch tactics used by Comcast to tie my hands for service. I am now stuck to a \$160 a month bill when I agreed only to \$100 a month for an internet/phone/cable package. They are a monopoly granted by government, and I resent it highly.

General Survey Comments from Web-based survey - Responses for those stated that they live outside City of Bellingham City limits
<p>I have been in customer service all of my career. I am taking this survey because the service I have received from Comcast is superior! Employees are competent, courteous and problems are resolved in a very timely manner. I believe Comcast provides better customer service than any other company I know. This was not always the case. I remember when customer service was poor. Comcast is an excellent company. I do not want more "government programs".</p>
<p>I have been waiting for service for 30 years</p>
<p>I primarily have Comcast service because of fast internet. It is somewhat unreliable as it slows considerably during certain times of the day. I watch hockey quite a bit during the season and have subscribed to the Center Ice package. The package offers games in HD, however, Comcast does not broadcast any games in HD, basically charging the same amount and saving money by broadcasting in standard definition. Their rates are ridiculous. I pay \$180 a month for tv, internet and phone. I make maybe 10 calls a month, watch only a few tv channels. They require a premium package to purchase the Center Ice package, yet broadcast the games in a reduced clarity. Sometimes the game is in better clarity streaming online. I will probably switch to satellite now that I own a home because the service from Comcast is completely awful.</p>
<p>I think that it is ridiculous that you now have to get a Comcast box in order to watch channels 30-117.</p>
<p>I think their service is expensive but they provide a good quality service. The times I've had problems I've been able to get them quickly resolved. In some cases it meant replacing equipment which is why I think a local office is very important. In another case they had to come to the house when I was upgrading to HD as I had receiver problems (had several hardware issues on their side during this upgrade). I think the rate of price increases over the last several years has been excessive and reflects the lack of alternatives.</p>
<p>I think they charge too much for the service they are giving. You're not getting a lot of channels but you're paying for them.</p>
<p>I very much want Comcast on our street, Chuckanut Point Road.</p>
<p>I would like more choice in what my cable package includes. As of now I watch one channel, KCTS mostly because of content second because I can't stand the commercials. I'd like more intelligent programming in the basic package.</p>
<p>I would like them to extend coverage to outlying areas.</p>
<p>I would like to have more than one TV cable available to provide choices in price and program quality. Right now it's Comcast or Dish receivers.</p>
<p>I would like to see an additional channel dedicated for education purposes and featuring content from Western Washington University.</p>
<p>I would love for Comcast to have competition. Their customer service is honestly the worst I have ever dealt with when it comes to a public service company. I feel very strongly about the fact that they train their employees to lie. If you were to pull my records you would be amazed what they have done to me. I have no problems with any other company. I have wanted to come to the attorney general but don't have the time or energy to fight with them. This is a story I hear throughout Whatcom County. Please do something about it. The fact that you are having to do the survey, etc., doesn't that answer your question?</p>

General Survey Comments from Web-based survey - Responses for those stated that they live outside City of Bellingham City limits

I would love to have a choice to have cable television, but Comcast has not come to my street - they stopped less than half a mile away. But there are many houses on my street - Chuckanut Point Road - that would definitely subscribe to cable if they would just extend their connections a bit further south! It is frustrating!

I would want to see Comcast offer menu choice to channel selection. Basically I can pay for any 10 channels offered by Comcast.

I feel strongly that pricing and price increases by Comcast are out of line and that pricing is a reflection of the monopoly that Comcast has in Bellingham.

In the past year my cable bill has increased far more than inflation. I just don't buy that I am being offered better technology as a justification for price increases. One of the worst charges is for my Internet cable modem monthly rental. I'm sure I have paid for my cable modem 10 times over the cost that Comcast paid for it!

I would welcome availability of Comcast cable service on Chuckanut Point Road, and believe many of my neighbors might as well. Have and use Comcast service elsewhere and, once installation was complete, have been a very satisfied user.

I'm curious whether COB will ever have public access as part of the franchise agreement with Comcast. As I understand it, our community has been allotted two channels but only makes use of one (BTV10). With all of the filmmakers in this community, and with video becoming an ever more popular means of communication, it seems like a public access channel could provide great experiences for community members in both production and channel operations. If this decision is made, opportunities should be open to area residents beyond the City limits, as we often work and spend money in Bellingham, as well as subscribe to Comcast (and thus pay the fees that the City receives).

I'm sick of the come-on offers that are only good for a few months. I'd be willing to sign a long-term agreement if it were at a rate equal to one of these "new Customer" rates. Comcast provides above average services, even so, the costs is way too High. Although satellite dish services are available---it's not an oranges-to-oranges comparison and therefore, comcast essentially is a monopoly. Either lower the price or give more channels for the rates. OR an entirely ala carte menu where the customer can pick only the channels they watch. Why should anyone pay for shopping channels???? And don't give me that "they're included free with your package" bulloney.

It is unreasonable for Comcast to not provide service to all areas outside the city limits. For example, some properties outside the city limits on Chuckanut Drive receive Comcast and others do not. This failure to provide service discourages competition, especially from DSL providers who charge high rates for low bandwidth service

General Survey Comments from Web-based survey - Responses for those stated that they live outside City of Bellingham City limits

I've been a Comcast customer for over 15 years and in Bellingham it was common to have poor service, especially for internet. They should not be allowed to mess with the internet at all because it's not their "core competency." When we moved to Birch Bay last year they completely messed up the laptops so we can no longer have wireless service in our house unless we buy their expensive package and pay 150 dollars to have them come out and install their router instead of mine. The laptops work fine everywhere else, people visiting our house with other internet providers can use our router no problem, but unless we buy their service, we as Comcast customers, are blocked by connecting wirelessly to the internet in our own home. When we have reception or connection problems (frequent) we call to have them fix it and they try and fix it on their end and say there's nothing they can do as according to them it's working fine. The mail server goes down all the time on their end or mail gets "lost." Both the TV and the service will stop working for no reason they can figure out. The offerings on TV and we have the expanded digital are nothing but reruns. They should be required to have at least a minimum amount of new programming and give customers a discount when all the programming is rehashed reruns and infomercials. Their customer service is terrible. They're in other states and don't even know where Bellingham is on the map, much less Birch Bay. I've been laughed at for complaining. I've been promised credits for outages I never received. I am usually the calmest, most reasonable person in the world except when it comes to dealing with Comcast. Their tech support is useless, read from scripts and have 7 minutes to get rid of you before their boss complains they're taking too long on a call. And now since they've put a limit on usage we are reluctant to download netflix movies to watch anymore in case we go over our "allotment" and have our service cut off as others across the country have. Please please give us an alternative to Comcast, especially out here in Birch Bay where the service is so poor they shouldn't even be charging us for it.

Need to offer ala carte option, so the consumer can pick and choose only the stations they watch and not a hundred that they never even tune into.

Need to provide cable service on the roads branching off Chuckanut

Please please please broadcast live county council meetings!! And please broadcast county committee meetings. You do such a good job with the city meetings.

Poor movie selection in the "on demand" section. Use netflix because limited selections

Price is my only big issue. They need to lower prices. Or create an in between to limited and Digital Economy. I had an Extended basic but when we had to get those digital boxes they made us go to Digital Economy for slightly more money.

Price is very high, probably due to lack of competition. The customer should not have to pay the franchise fee.

Rates

Rates keep increasing.

Service is Too pricy, Very difficult to determine pricing on the website. Could not get the needed information when visiting the office on Cordata. I had to call a rep on the phone. also if you are on a package and wish to downgrade to save money, they remove you from the package and charge more for the individual services. This is monopolizing the service. I feel this is an important issue to address.

Service needed to Chuckanut Point Road

The ability to select the channels received is available technology, a service that would be embraced by customers, but rejected by Comcast because they lack customer friendliness.

General Survey Comments from Web-based survey - Responses for those stated that they live outside City of Bellingham City limits
The only aspect that consistently annoys me is the increased volume of advertisements on many channels.
The only internet service we get is Comcast. I think they charge too much because people living out in the county don't have other options. I also think that Comcast prices are different for different people depending on the rep who answers. Pricing is not consistent. Pricing for cable other than basic is too expensive again because comcast doesn't have to offer competitive rates.
The price for NO television and only phone and internet is exceedingly very high. This needs to be reduced to a level that is more in line with a phone company and DSL.
<p>The rates are to high and and keep going higher. When your "promotional rate" expires there is a "game" one must play to keep your rate the same which involves going up the chain of command in the Customer Service office until you get a person who will help you keep your rate or only charge you a few bucks more per month.</p> <p>Additionally, I'm thinking it would be nice for Comcast to reward their long time faithful customers with a price break once in awhile instead of only new customers.</p> <p>Thanks for the opportunity for in put.</p>
There needs to be a package for seniors or those on limited income. I don't 1000 channels to view!!!
They are getting very expensive because they are they only game in town
THEY ARE RUDE AND CHARGE WAY TO MUCH MONEY
<p>This is all about TV. You don't mention cable internet or cable phone services...</p> <p>too fucking expensive</p>
Trying to do business at the support office is impossible. They have a long line of older folks and it can take along time to get thru the line. Something needs to be done to help them because they have nothing better to do and many go in person just to have people to talk to.
Very poor customer service. Phone tree access gives limited choices and frequently ends in incorrect dept. Redirection results in more wait time.
Very unsatisfied will switch to satilite soon
WAY TOO EXPENSIVE
We feel, they should give good customers (always paying ontime or early) the best rate. Every year, we have to call and negotiate the cheapest rate which in the end we get. Why not just do it.
We've been very frustrated having to pick up/drop off extra 'boxes' to accomodate our new TV. Technology must be available for wireless TV service.
When the FCC started allowing cable companies to encrypt all their channels it rendered every TVs digital tuners useless. Those without cable card slots on their TVs are forced to rent boxes from Comcast to view what their TV use to be able to view at no additional fee. We were forced to drop cable in our home because the additional box fees and poor picture quality made it undesirable to continue service.
Wish we had Verizon Fios!

3. **Web site survey – Response to question about hold times greater than 10 minutes**

Table 16: Web-based survey – Response to questions about hold times greater than 10 minutes

Question 1: Choose the answer below that best describes where you live:	Question 16: If over 10 minutes, estimate how long it was before your call was answered:
Within Bellingham City limits	15
Within Bellingham City limits	15
Within Bellingham City limits	15
Within Bellingham City limits	20
Within Bellingham City limits	25
Within Bellingham City limits	1 hour
Within Bellingham City limits	1 hour and 9 minutes
Within Bellingham City limits	12 - 15 minutes
Within Bellingham City limits	15-20
Within Bellingham City limits	15-20 minutes
Within Bellingham City limits	15-20 minutes after being transferred many times
Within Bellingham City limits	20 min.
Within Bellingham City limits	20 minutes
Within Bellingham City limits	20 minutes
Within Bellingham City limits	20 minutes
Within Bellingham City limits	20 minutes
Within Bellingham City limits	20 minutes
Within Bellingham City limits	20 minutes
Within Bellingham City limits	20-30 minutes
Within Bellingham City limits	25 minutes
Within Bellingham City limits	30 minutes
Within Bellingham City limits	30 minutes
Within Bellingham City limits	30 minutes
Within Bellingham City limits	30+ Minutes
Within Bellingham City limits	30-45
Within Bellingham City limits	35 MINUTES
Within Bellingham City limits	40 minutes. Had to call back and wait again
Within Bellingham City limits	45 min
Within Bellingham City limits	45 minutes
Within Bellingham City limits	about 27 minutes

Question 1: Choose the answer below that best describes where you live:	Question 16: If over 10 minutes, estimate how long it was before your call was answered:
Within Bellingham City limits	don't remember
Within Bellingham City limits	dude, just try to call them, good luck
Within Bellingham City limits	Eighteen minutes & then another wait until transferred to correct department.
Within Bellingham City limits	have not called in past 2 years -- have contacted Councilman Weiss asking for more news channels on basic cable
Within Bellingham City limits	I don't know how long because I have not timed the calls. But compared with other service providers like Qwest, PSE and the City Comcast's phone services are horrible. UNLESS you hit the button that you want to buy a new product or service. Then you get to a sales person very fast. But if you need help or are experiencing a problem its a VERY long wait.
Within Bellingham City limits	I gave up after 25 minutes on hold once. Its always a bad experience when you have to try to get hold of someone at Comcast on the phone. Better to go to the office.
Within Bellingham City limits	I hung up and called another day.
Within Bellingham City limits	I mowed my entire lawn once while on my bluetooth waiting for them to take me off hold. I don't know why I didn't just hang up. I guess I wanted to see how long it would really take. Anyway I think it takes me over an hour to mow the lawn.
Within Bellingham City limits	i never got a person
Within Bellingham City limits	I remember one time witing for about fifteen minutes....how aggravating...especially after being put throught their "Phone Tree" from Hell
Within Bellingham City limits	It seemed like hours. I gave up every time I tried and ended up going to the Cordata office after I figured out where it was because they don't make it easy to find that out either. What's the matter with that company?
Within Bellingham City limits	It was well over a half hour and many call backs because I got nowhere.
Within Bellingham City limits	most times I just hang-up in anger when no one answers.
Within Bellingham City limits	never got to one. its awful.
Within Bellingham City limits	Never less than several minutes and far to many button pushes
Within Bellingham City limits	One call took 4 hours with a number of very short conversations and long periods on hold.
Within Bellingham City limits	Over an hour

Question 1: Choose the answer below that best describes where you live:	Question 16: If over 10 minutes, estimate how long it was before your call was answered:
Within Bellingham City limits	Seemed like forever...at any rate I finally gave up. I tried many different times to get service via a p[hone call. Have you ever called that 800 number? Its absolutely the worst. It makes me want to cut my cable and buy a dish, xcept that I use them for internet too.
Within Bellingham City limits	So long I can't even count the minutes
Within Bellingham City limits	they made appointment to call me back, and they did but put me on hold, and then it was 8 p.m. closing time and they hung up. didn't reach until the next day
Outside Bellingham City limits	15
Outside Bellingham City limits	20
Outside Bellingham City limits	20
Outside Bellingham City limits	25
Outside Bellingham City limits	20 mins
Outside Bellingham City limits	20 minutes
Outside Bellingham City limits	20 minutes, then re-routed to another dept., for 10 min.
Outside Bellingham City limits	23 minutes has been the longest
Outside Bellingham City limits	30 minutes
Outside Bellingham City limits	45 minute
Outside Bellingham City limits	60 minutes
Outside Bellingham City limits	60+
Outside Bellingham City limits	don't remember
Outside Bellingham City limits	line disconnected and no answer received
Outside Bellingham City limits	n/a
Outside Bellingham City limits	Never
Outside Bellingham City limits	Several times they had me wait for over ten minutes and then disconnected the call.

4. **Web site survey – Response to questions about channel with poor quality**

Table 17: Web-based survey – Channels with technical quality or reception problems

	Question: Are there specific channels on which you experience poor picture quality or other reception problems?		
Choose the answer below that best describes where you live:	1st Channel/ Response	2nd Channel/ Response	3rd Channel/ Response
Within Bellingham City limits	4	401	661
Within Bellingham City limits	4		
Within Bellingham City limits	5	4	7
Within Bellingham City limits	6		
Within Bellingham City limits	9	109	619
Within Bellingham City limits	10		
Within Bellingham City limits	12		
Within Bellingham City limits	12		
Within Bellingham City limits	12	13	Several upper channels
Within Bellingham City limits	19	20	59
Within Bellingham City limits	19	51	
Within Bellingham City limits	21	78	15
Within Bellingham City limits	30	31	
Within Bellingham City limits	30		
Within Bellingham City limits	48	108	655
Within Bellingham City limits	54	58	68
Within Bellingham City limits	101		
Within Bellingham City limits	252		
Within Bellingham City limits	117 KIRO		
Within Bellingham City limits	11—poor sound, was not fixed by repairman		
Within Bellingham City limits	26. I like the Arts Program. Sound is awful.		

	Question: Are there specific channels on which you experience poor picture quality or other reception problems?		
Choose the answer below that best describes where you live:	1st Channel/ Response	2nd Channel/ Response	3rd Channel/ Response
Within Bellingham City limits	7 Occasional "cut-outs of picture		
Within Bellingham City limits	9 KCTS in High def, bad sound		
Within Bellingham City limits	all	all	all
Within Bellingham City limits	all channels		
Within Bellingham City limits	all the rerun movies .. poor sound from old stock		
Within Bellingham City limits	ALL....AUDIO OUT OF SYNC WITH VIDEO.		
Within Bellingham City limits	Audio out of sync with picture a lot on different channels		
Within Bellingham City limits	channel 4 KOMO sound is muffled		
Within Bellingham City limits	channels over 30 - very poor sound		
Within Bellingham City limits	E!	TNT	Lifetime
Within Bellingham City limits	Fox Sports HD	Fox HD and Regular	
Within Bellingham City limits	I miss the city council meetings and the local stories on the channel 10		
Within Bellingham City limits	It varies from day to day		
Within Bellingham City limits	king 5		
Within Bellingham City limits	KVOS TV 12		
Within Bellingham City limits	local channels from seattle and bellingham		

	Question: Are there specific channels on which you experience poor picture quality or other reception problems?		
Choose the answer below that best describes where you live:	1st Channel/ Response	2nd Channel/ Response	3rd Channel/ Response
Within Bellingham City limits	local channels like 10, 12		
Within Bellingham City limits	local channels like komo and 26		
Within Bellingham City limits	Lower analog channels		
Within Bellingham City limits	Many "HD" channels have very little HD programming (comedy central, syfy, etc)		
Within Bellingham City limits	More HD needed for basic cable		
Within Bellingham City limits	most		
Within Bellingham City limits	Most HD channels		
Within Bellingham City limits	none from my experience		
Within Bellingham City limits	northwest news, king, bellinghamtv,kvos		
Within Bellingham City limits	pbs channel 9 often has poor, and uneven sound quality		
Within Bellingham City limits	poor sound	poor sound	poor sound
Within Bellingham City limits	Pretty much all channels are worthless - this is not a comcast issue	Why people willingly submit themselves to be programmed 37 hours per week is beyond me	I only subscribe to cable to get cheaper internet and telephone
Within Bellingham City limits	Q13 FOX - Audio problems		

	Question: Are there specific channels on which you experience poor picture quality or other reception problems?		
Choose the answer below that best describes where you live:	1st Channel/ Response	2nd Channel/ Response	3rd Channel/ Response
Within Bellingham City limits	Sometimes all channels		
Within Bellingham City limits	SPEED!!! Why don't we get this channel in Bellingham. Instead we get golf!		
Within Bellingham City limits	tennis channel	all channels	
Within Bellingham City limits	the channels at 550 & up	66 & down	often my sound & picture do not work Many on going problems
Within Bellingham City limits	university of W -- both channels very poor	often the 3 c-spans are poor	22 & 27 often bad picture
			Totals - within City limits
Outside Bellingham City limits	0	0	0
Outside Bellingham City limits	2	3	4,5,6,7,8
Outside Bellingham City limits	21		
Outside Bellingham City limits	29	30	26
Outside Bellingham City limits	105	Any of the Center Ice Packages channels. Comcast does not broadcast any HD games, which is why we are paying the premium.	
Outside Bellingham City limits	1-Jul	1-Nov	
Outside Bellingham City limits	all		

	Question: Are there specific channels on which you experience poor picture quality or other reception problems?		
Choose the answer below that best describes where you live:	1st Channel/ Response	2nd Channel/ Response	3rd Channel/ Response
Outside Bellingham City limits	All HD channels are heavily compressed.	All SD channels are heavily compressed.	
Outside Bellingham City limits	any high definition channel		
Outside Bellingham City limits	anything non-HD is highly variable		
Outside Bellingham City limits	at various times can be any channel		
Outside Bellingham City limits	it varies on what day of the week it is....		
Outside Bellingham City limits	KVOS Channel 12		
Outside Bellingham City limits	networks get dropped and go blank	68 and other higher ones breaks up transmission	pixelated transmission
Outside Bellingham City limits	none	none	none
Outside Bellingham City limits	On Demand	Some HD channels	
Outside Bellingham City limits	reception interruptions on all channels		

B. EXHIBIT B – Transcripts from public meetings where public provided input

Table 18: – Transcript of May 25th Public Input Meeting

Description	Comcast Franchise Renewal Project - Public Meeting – 5/25/2010		
Date	5/25/2010	Location	Council Chambers
Time	Speaker	Note	
3:01:25 PM	Marty Mulholland		
3:01:45 PM	Slide 3	Overview of Agenda - Introductions	
3:03:30 PM	Slide 4	Franchise Renewal Timeline	
3:06:21 PM	Slide 5		
3:07:00 PM	Brian Grogan		
3:07:24 PM	Slide 6	What is a franchise agreement?	
3:10:22 PM	Slide 7	What the City can/cannot do	
3:12:59 PM	Slide 8	Why is franchise renewal important?	
3:15:45 PM	Slide 9	How will new franchise impact you?	
3:16:56 PM	Janice Keller		
3:17:06 PM	Slide 10	Additional Public Input Opportunities	
3:18:47 PM	Dennis Lane	Mention of new technology. 2008 Transition from analog to digital. Stations doubled or quadrupled themselves. True for BTv10? Can channel 10 get another channel?	
3:19:24 PM	Brian Grogan	Yes. There is nothing to prevent City and Comcast from agreeing to multi-casting. Maintain 10 in analog format on basic tier then agree to digital. HD version or just digital. Subscribers who select only basic would still get 10 with a better visual available in	

Description Comcast Franchise Renewal Project - Public Meeting – 5/25/2010			
Date	5/25/2010	Location	Council Chambers
		another format.	
3:20:04 PM	Dennis Lane	Will it be showing the same or different programming. Brian Grogan - It would be one signal split and shown in two formats.	
3:20:21 PM	Robert Clark	Google TV? Would that service be regulated by a franchise the same as Comcast.	
3:20:43 PM	Brian Grogan	Google TV is new. Not understood. Cable over the top delivery mechanism. Google does not need wires through city to get Google on your TV. You buy a piece of equipment enabling Google TV unit to interface with computer and satellite provider and you could scroll between You-Tube, DVS and other content on the main TV in your house. Two different things. Google fiber would create a robust system over their pipe. Roll out in the fall. You could use a Comcast interface you're your bb modem and TV. Would not be regulated. Only true cable service – point to multi point service - is regulated.	
3:23:17 PM	Susanne Blaise	Telephone systems are jumping into entertainment and satellite companies are already there. Neither one pays franchise fees. What kind of push back. do you see on the part of Comcast to that?	
3:23:54 PM	Brian Grogan	Clarify - Cities cannot regulate satellite. Qwest is the dominant phone provider here. Elsewhere ATT and Verizon phone providers have video service pay a franchise fee, some places pay PEG fee & provide PEG channels and can be regulated. Comcast is concerned about competitors not facing the same challenges. There is an emerging competition by cable over top. Can watch things over Hulu three days later. Issue to debate. Believes that content won't migrate to a free system. There will be a mechanism to extract fees. These are on the horizon.	
3:27:33 PM	Susanne Blaise	Have you experienced push back in negotiation to date in other towns?	
3:27:45 PM	Brian Grogan	Comcast has proposed language related to competitive equity. They will seek relief from unfair competition. Will be driven by policy makers. Can anticipate competitive equity argument. Will be prepared to address. Cannot predict how it will come out.	
3:28:54 PM	Susanne Blaise	Was any of that included in Spokane s agreement?	

Description	Comcast Franchise Renewal Project - Public Meeting – 5/25/2010		
Date	5/25/2010	Location	Council Chambers
3:29:06 PM	Brian Grogan	Spokane has competitive equity language. Very lengthy. Issue didn’t change, Congress changed. Feds are looking to rewrite the regulations. Impacts Comcast and competitors. Don't think it is unreasonable for Comcast to expect fairness but city wants flexibility too.	
3:30:38 PM	Jamie Hernandez	Does the city have specific requirements for a proposal. What do you want to hear in terms of us putting together ideas for input?	
3:30:56 PM	Brian Grogan	No specific format for input. Stories. Dreams. Complaints about shortcomings. Interested in anything relates to the company, service delivery, facilities in city. Anything. Will sort for relevance.	
3:31:38 PM	Jamie Hernandez	Is there a vision/mission for this project? PEG access?	
3:31:55 PM	Brian Grogan	No mission statement. In terms of PEG access, the city has informed him of interest in demand, cost, long term planning, how it would be accomplished. Want lots of input from the community. Has an open mind about the what options might be available. Has seen everything across the spectrum on approach to issue.	
3:32:53 PM	Jamie Hernandez	Would like vision mission statement. Authorities. Everyone is interested in getting public access and educational and getting people on the same page so they can help. Need a little direction.	
3:33:30 PM	Brian Grogan	That would be good for what we are looking for today. Sounds like time for Q&A	
3:33:59 PM	Janice Keller	Opened the floor for questions.	
3:34:10 PM	Dennis Lane	15 years from now the technology will not be what it is now. Need to negotiate something that can adapt itself to changes during that 15 years. Considering that?	
3:34:51 PM	Brian Grogan	Yes. One thing that will not change is the delivery mechanism. It may transition to a wireless delivery. Will get flexibility.	
3:35:27 PM	Janice Keller	Call for comment	
3:36:25 PM	Dennis Lane	Executive Director of Whatcom Community Television and Communications. Been around for 15 years. Has seen Channel 10 has grown as a platform for education and public information. WCTC was born as advocacy organization about community	

Description	Comcast Franchise Renewal Project - Public Meeting – 5/25/2010		
Date	5/25/2010	Location	Council Chambers
		broadcast, outreach and education. Have continued in that role about advantages of a media literate community. Played proactive role in establishing two low power radio stations in County. Have applied for FCC stimulus fund to bring broadband outreach and training to underserved communities in Whatcom County. Now is the time to give the local citizens a public media platform too. Speaks not just from the City but to/for community orgs and schools. In Bham the educational system students are learning and producing videos. Showing in festivals and streaming on internet. Irony that children can share their video technology via internet across the country but cannot air it locally. 2005 WCTC set up a survey. Almost all organizations agreed that they should have access to public video medium to share economic impacts with community and State. Need technological help. Time for local video potentials to be realized. Speaking for last 15 years of need a fuller public platform. Perhaps can get a robust public voice. Asks community, municipality, non-profit education org and Comcast to enter into dialog to provide inclusive community platform for the public.	
3:40:55 PM	Dennis Lane	Part 2. Breakout over 2-3 years to show a transition into creating public community broadcasting channel. Starts with cooperation of Comcast, city and county. Will provide it tomorrow. Sees it as a way to really begin a public thing and really inform the community. Janice Keller – welcomes additional info.	
3:42:03 PM	Jamie Hernandez	Local business owner since 1999. Seen a lot of changes Glad GP gone and downtown smells better. Public access is important for providing a platform for normal (lay) people. Bham is a progressive city w/progressive movements and supporting those is important to community and world. Earth is going through bad stuff and doesn't have a voice. Provide a platform to put out messages about the community and earth and this community – would be huge asset.. Bham puts on a lot of events – Art walk, movies in parks, music that people don't really know about. Locals know about but not others. If others knew would benefit businesses and make our community tighter which will support local government. Grow the community will grow the government and pay you paychecks.	
3:44:05 PM	Robert Clark	Speaking for self. Started with public cable access in 1988 in Eugene. Was involved with a program where person with waist length hair had it shaved on TV. Many shows he produced were found by flipping around the channel. Does programs on trains, etc. Not a lot of viewers but they learned something. BTV is a good channel does good work for city. In a robust PEG the value that comes from showing Jr. Ski to Sea or Farmers Market. People can't see events they are participating in. Comcast has had a hot and cold system. Portland actively seeks out local programming. Could exist in Bellingham. It would differentiate Comcast from satellite as satellite can't do it. Citizens seek out local sports	

Description Comcast Franchise Renewal Project - Public Meeting – 5/25/2010			
Date	5/25/2010	Location	Council Chambers
		and local events to watch. Will help.	
3:48:23 PM	Julianna Guy	Questions: Will Comcast be making a presentation to the public to tell the people of Bellingham why they should be renewed? Brian Grogan - not aware of such a plan but they will have to face the Council as part of the process. Public will have opportunity to give input to Council at the time of that hearing. There will not be a public hearing. Does the city have the right to tell Comcast that they will go out and solicit another company. Under federal law, it give Comcast the presumption of renewal unless they are held in default or fail to meet City's needs. No obligation to get constituent approval. Can only happen if Comcast has failed to comply with present cont	
3:50:35 PM	Julianna Guy	Think is unfortunate that we are asking and not making demands. Has history with cable companies, audited franchise agreements, and they are less than forthcoming. Bottom line only. Can we know Comcast gross income from City?	
3:51:26 PM	Julianna Guy	Yes, asking for last two years of income. Julie - Will be public? Brian - Yes. Julie - Before renewal is signed? Brian - Yes. Julie - Important for public to know. Budget for BTM 10 is so small, but another \$500K would help to inform public. Comcast has Channel 26 playing video of concerts called "other programming". Channel is not being used to any benefit. City has been way too lax in going after Comcast. important to be as aggressive in asking for much more than we have now. Wants them to carry C-Span 3. Should be carried in basic tier. We have no input into what is in the tiers. Ideal would be if we can pay \$X for each channel. Need to be very aggressive in going after Comcast on this contract. Surprised not many people here. Heard many complain about service. Complaints about bundling. City needs to look at it very closely.	
3:56:49 PM	Marty Mullholland	Audit is underway, may not be concluded by the negotiations. Audit in 2002 was not resolved until 2007. Julie - why so long? Marty Mullholland - disagreement re interpretations.	
3:58:28 PM	Julianna Guy e	Audited two cable companies. Fee paying on gross?	
3:58:43 PM	Marty Mullholland	Yes. Will receive report, will show you. Moss & Barnett will review and inspect Comcast corresponding records.	
3:59:10 PM	Julianna Guy	Should be cut and dry but they argue. Not clear in the contract. Relating to Mining accident, safety violations infractions companies fight and sue so they don't have to pay right away. Cable companies won't settle till they negotiate with cities down to the nub.	

Description	Comcast Franchise Renewal Project - Public Meeting – 5/25/2010		
Date	5/25/2010	Location	Council Chambers
		Need to be vigilant and careful with wording.	
4:00:23 PM	Janice Keller	Thank you. Invite to other newly arrived public	
4:00:54 PM	Kay Sardo	Concerned about quality of TV basic price. Overabundance of shopping channels and absence of C-Span 3. Would help the people at home the most and longest who cannot afford upper tiers. Give access to public TV. Applauds BTB 10 for improving quality. Local production talent of TV is in abundance. Sad we don't have access to that channel to showcase local talent.	
4:02:53 PM	Janice Keller	Encourage friends and family to come out and participate in tomorrow's meeting.	
4:03:30 PM	Dennis Lane	Can this meeting be brought out to the public on a Saturday? Invite schools and nonprofits. Please take it out into the public and draw more people?	
4:04:23 PM	Janice Keller	Feels like we have pretty good outreach. Newspapers, radio. From a resource perspective cannot add another meeting. Many calls coming in. Have had good communication with schools and college. Dennis Lane - can we get that information available. Janice Keller yes. In the July timeframe.	
4:06:34 PM	Jamie Hernandez	Past franchise agreement from other cities available?	
4:06:55 PM	Brian Grogan	All are public information on cities website. Can Google it on internal search engine. There is a list of Washington cities he has done work with. Has done several things including transfer of ownerships, PEG access agreements along with several renewals around the country. All public information	
4:08:14 PM	Jamie Hernandez	Getting information on PEG will help focus ideas.	
4:08:29 PM	Robert Clark	Produce a draft of needs assessment to the City Council in July? Will public get an opportunity to speak about that? Will that held in public session or worksession with Council	
4:09:06 PM	Brian Grogan	Right now in information gathering phase. Need to put together and clarify. One person may not agree with another. Information will be assimilated. Not sure if there will be a report to accept or reject. There will be a document but don't know what form for	

Description	Comcast Franchise Renewal Project - Public Meeting – 5/25/2010		
Date	5/25/2010	Location	Council Chambers
		Council's review. He keenly understands that Council is fin	
4:10:34 PM	Janice Keller	Will post results of survey and public comment tracking document. You will see all the public input in some form.	
4:11:15 PM	Susanne Blaise	One voice does not constitute a need for the city. How many voices do?.	
4:11:24 PM	Brian Grogan	Will listen to everything you say. Will all be documented. Cannot guarantee what will go into final document. Has to go through the process. Establish needs – goes to Council – draft the draft franchise – negotiations with Comcast – Council may reject some things in the draft – rewrite – ultimately executed. Comment may or may not end up in the contract. What ends up there will be determined by what happens through the process. It is up to the City.	
4:12:45 PM	Susanne Blaise	(Reviewed process) Voices are part of the needs assessment given to officials.	
4:13:05 PM	Brian Grogan	Cost benefit will factor into the decisions. Clients are diversely different in different cities.	
4:13:49 PM	Susanne Blaise	When elected officials decide what is going to happen. Will there be public input at that point to talk about what they decided the needs are?	
4:14:09 PM	Brian Grogan	Defer to staff	
4:14:22 PM	Joan Hoisington	Contract negotiations will happen with Council with staff and attorneys in Executive Session. Public input is now. Don't usually go back to public to approve sections. Needs assessment will come from community and staff. The final needs assessment will be used in negotiations. This is the opportunity for public input. Up to the Council	
4:15:50 PM	Susanne Blaise	A contract is done with public resources so not out of the question to ask for another opportunity to weigh in.	
4:16:33 PM	Joan	Can always contact elected officials. Can have conversation with elected officials. Public can have input all along.	

Description	Comcast Franchise Renewal Project - Public Meeting – 5/25/2010		
Date	5/25/2010	Location	Council Chambers
4:17:24 PM	Susanne Blaise	When they get the needs assessed, can the community weigh in.	
4:17:55 PM	Joan Hoisington	You always have input.	
4:18:05 PM	Marty Mullholland	Council members are very interested in the survey results. Taking minutes today. They want to understand what has come through from the community.	
4:19:05 PM	Man with dog	Comcast is like BP - forcing things on customers things they do not want. Taking privacy away. You have to talk loud. Forcing things people have what they don't want. Not good what Comcast is doing. Big communication towers. Company . . . [Heavy accent; did not speak into microphone]	
4:21:40 PM	Dennis Lane	There is such a wealth of -- part of NYC technical media community in early days of public access. Worked in Jersey City and for Canadian company brought out by Comcast. There is such a wealth of media people in this community. It is a shame that we do not tap into the talent. Connect with them for their experience. Does not take much money, just talent. Non profits are begging for a voice. There are a lot of people who can brainstorm the issues.	
4:23:49 PM	Robert Clark	Was talking about more input during needs assessment. Right now when the Council will be looking for direction - may not understand how close is a fully functioning PEG system in the County. Council has seen it as a controversial issue. Council should understand there is the capability to pull something together. People in the community are eager to help.	
4:25:38 PM	Brian Grogan	Contract up in 2011. Tight window for process. Sometimes someone will submit a written plan – right way to handle it “here’s how we think we could produce enough programming to go on it” or “here is what I would do with that channel”. Would be helpful. Public testimony is just one tool. No one is prevented from making their concerns heard. Will be a lengthy process and the public can give their concerns. There is a tight window. Submitting a written plan or ideas is more helpful in the process. Testimony is important but ideas are better to the process.	
4:27:26 PM	Jamie Hernandez	Wants to be professional with a message that is clear and concise. Willing to do the work. Needs guidance to get the form right.	

Description	Comcast Franchise Renewal Project - Public Meeting – 5/25/2010		
Date	5/25/2010	Location	Council Chambers
4:28:09 PM	Marty Mullholland	Survey will walk you through many of these issues. Guided answers and open ended questions on services important.	
4:28:59 PM	Marty Mullholland	Current and future agreements have sections that would allow for a another channel to be released today. City Council has had conversations about it and decided not to provide a public access channel. Expects community desires to be heightened now. Council could authorize a second channel at any time. As we hear the different ideas we will understand the channeling provision of the contract that will help negotiate. Do the survey; that will be very helpful. The more responses the better	
4:31:42 PM	Julie Guy	Who pays for the channel release and productions?	
4:32:02 PM	Marty Mullholland	It is not clear who pays for what. Current agreement allows Council to direct franchise fees toward that. Can direct some to pay for equipment.	
4:32:40 PM	Julie Guy	Public access channel should be funded by Comcast. Problems are money and content. \$ should come from Comcast.	
4:33:38 PM	Brian Grogan	In current contract franchise fees are set for the last 15 years. There is not sufficient capital for Public access channel in it. For next contract there are franchise fees derived from gross revenues. There can be funding for capital purchases related to PEG; not operational. You can buy microphones and cameras but does not pay for staff. If the City chooses to require the public access channel how will you get programming and who will pay capital costs who will pay operational costs? Those are options out there. Any fees imposed in the franchise will find way to customer bill. Council consideration has to determine that any fees on that bill serves a good purpose as decided by Council.	
4:36:00 PM	Julie Guy	FCC says if the city negotiates a capital fee that is not paid by the company – they pass it on to subscribers..	
4:36:18 PM	Brian Grogan	In both franchise and capital fees FCC allows them to be passed through to the customer	
4:36:32 PM	Julie	Cable companies lobbied better than cities.	
4:37:02 PM	Brian Grogan	City had authority to impose up to 5% and also an additional fee for PEG purposes. Can pass through to customer. Cannot impose operational fee. Has to come out of the city	

Description	Comcast Franchise Renewal Project - Public Meeting – 5/25/2010		
Date	5/25/2010	Location	Council Chambers
		funds.	
4:38:48 PM	Man with dog	Let the public talk and not just you. Not a brainwash. You want the power your way. [No microphone]	
4:39:33 PM	Brian Grogan	Represents the City. I am not Comcast.	
4:39:51 PM	Robert Clark	City has not asked for the full 5%. There is untapped potential. A plan can be established to maximize the use of that money for a healthy PEG system. Has hope this can happen now.	
4:41:03 PM	Janice Keller	Paraphrase: City Council should go up to 5%?	
4:41:20 PM	Dennis Lane	Is there a possibility for partnerships? County is negotiating with Comcast too. There was an earlier attempt to form a joint partnership. If .75 county can be used and .75 from city and match funding some outside source – a foundation or something – and if we could use capital grants for one time only fee to get the necessary equipment. These strategies can be talked about if we really want public access. Janice Keller: Great ideas.	
4:42:46 PM	Adjourn		

Table 19: Transcript of May 26th Public Input Meeting

Description	Comcast Franchise Renewal Public Meeting #2 – 5/26/2010		
Date	5/26/2010	Location	Council Chambers
Time	Speaker	Note	
7:01:14 PM	Marty Mulholland	Welcome	
7:01:38 PM	Slide 2	Agenda (started recording)	

Description	Comcast Franchise Renewal Public Meeting #2 – 5/26/2010		
Date	5/26/2010	Location	Council Chambers
7:02:43 PM		Introductions - Project Team	
7:03:22 PM	Slide 3	Franchise Renewal Timeline	
7:07:11 PM	Slide 5	Consultant Team	
7:07:57 PM	Brian Grogan	Introduction	
7:08:16 PM	Slide 6	What is a franchise agreement?	
7:11:50 PM	Slide 7	What the city can/cannot do	
7:14:31 PM	Slide 8	Why is franchise renewal important?	
7:16:19 PM	Slide 9	How will new franchise impact you?	
7:18:36 PM	Janice Keller		
7:18:49 PM	Slide 10	Additional Public Input Opportunities	
7:19:50 PM		Invitation for comments/questions	
7:20:04 PM	Slide 12	Public Input	
7:22:38 PM	Derek Wilson	Pros of Comcast is a really fast internet. Does a lot online and likes the speed. Likes the number of channels, on-demand programs and HD channels. Cons of Comcast is the overall inability to fulfill the satisfaction of the customer. Example the format of customer service on the phone. Not being able to receive support from a Comcast building within walking distance. Random cable and on-demand failures. 15 year agreements. Professionalism of employees - some are good, but they need proper training to perform tasks professionally.	
7:24:11 PM	Mr. Wilson	Has lived in Bham for 20 years. Would like to know location of Comcast headquarters. Brian – Philadelphia. Was told it was located in France. Bought condo in Bham with 7 buildings. Has Comcast in 6 of the buildings. The developer put in DTV in clubhouse. With QWest had excellent service then AT&T took over for about 3 years and got good service. Last bill was \$83 included 3 TVs and computer and telephone service. That has doubled	

Description	Comcast Franchise Renewal Public Meeting #2 – 5/26/2010		
Date	5/26/2010	Location	Council Chambers
		<p>with Comcast. Comcast service has been nil in our case. But not the same in all buildings. Example, when I left on the 8th of December, was without service for 3 days before he went to Florida. Nothing was working. When he came back at the end of April everything was working fine. Neighborhood is essentially older people and are dissatisfied with Comcast. Concerned about an agreement signed for 15 years. Understands the company would like that long but it is much for 85 for old people. Does not like the idea of a 15 year contract.</p> <p>As for service, one experience he had 1 year ago – and the office is right across the street from the condo – but they don't like for you to come in. You can't telephone there, they refuse to take phone calls. They sent out young fellow that afternoon, said he was from Comcast and it said right on his jacket that Comcast gets it right the first time. I said when you get finished I would like to go over it with him to make sure everything is working. That was fine. After about an hour I got called outside to talk to my neighbor upstairs. He was there for an hour and 15 minutes. And he said Mr. Wilson can you sign this and I said sure but as I said, I would like to go over it with you. He said I can't. I am only allowed to be here an hour. I've been here an hour and 15 minutes. Assured me everything was working fine. Went in and not a damn thing was working. Went into closet with control panel is and found it all apart and there was ball the size of a soccer ball and twisted up with wires. Looked like wife with curlers in her hair. There was at least 50 connections with little twisted wires. Went across the street to the office and asked for service and lady said there is nothing they could do. Said I had to call Tacoma. I said I have already done that but was on the phone for 10 minutes not getting any answer. I said there is a gentleman that sits right there in that office that I would like to talk to. She said we can't do that. I said I have been w/o service for 3 days. I said I'm not leaving until I know where I stand. She went into the room 5-10 minutes and came out and said I'm sorry we can't do anything for you. She couldn't see from where she was but the guy was saying come on in. I talked to him before about service. Sat down and told him the story. He apologized. I said not to fire the young man, it is his fault. He hasn't had any training. Guy said we'll get someone there possibly by this evening. About 6 o'clock a young girl came over. She said she was from Comcast but did not know what for. I told her. She was there for 30 mins and fixed wires, checked phone, TV and computer and everything. After that everything worked fine till December when I left. Oddly everything was fixed by the time got back. Don't understand. Comcast is big and respectable. They try to have good service. But they have to make it easier for people to get in contact with them. According to the guy in the office the young man was not a part of the company. Well according to his jacket it says Comcast does it right the first time. He said well he is only just a contractor and he is only allowed to be at your place for no more than an hour. After that he is on his own time. Concerned about signing 15 year franchise agreement. Phone call complaint. When you call you are on the phone for quite some time before anyone answers the phone. First person who comes on is Ben Stein and they have these commercials. Now I am wasting</p>	

Description	Comcast Franchise Renewal Public Meeting #2 – 5/26/2010		
Date	5/26/2010	Location	Council Chambers
		time listening to him for 5 mins. I don't have that kind of time. Concerned that 15 years too long. Should be a way to get out of it. And on the computer, has bought 3 computers in last 10 years. One now is 3 years old and Comcast says the problem is the computer. Bought a new computer and then found out the trouble was not the computer, it was Comcast..	
7:35:00 PM	Kay Rich	Completed survey. Would like to have them add an additional channel for higher education. We have Western and Vo tech programming.	
7:36:21 PM	Dennis Lane	Thank you. WCTC [address]. Spoke yesterday about Public access. Wants to talk about feasibility today. He proposed a 5 year program to allow us to reach out into the community and to build up content. Training non profits in production re timing understanding their responsibilities of getting guests . Realizing there will be a technical crew. All they will have to worry about is their part. Since they are on the front line of their issue they would bring their issues and guests to begin to speak for ½ possibly TV program. Idea is to start in first year - year ½ not just with training but also building content for Channel 26. Prime time between 6-8:00 and develop programming for that 7 days a week. 14 hours per week - a month of programming? Would be looking at nonprofit, at youth and seniors. Look at out of town programming. There is a lot of programming that could go on the air that way. Would give a good chance to stretch their wings over a two year period . The first year would be looking at space. Looking at Pickford which was advertising their space in that building. Staff of 2 people - technician and Station manager/outreach person. First two years would be intense with outreach assessing community groups and non profits working with them and asking for volunteers to come from community and seeing whether there is a heartbeat around the subject of public access. I think there is. We should ask for a Grant from Comcast for production space and equipment. In downstairs cellar of Pickford to rent out as studio space. For \$3500 to \$4500 can get one camera studio and editing facility and something for outreach. Over 5 year period can establish itself as an integral part of community. Look at channel 26 as a possible makeover (?) or move to another option. Would be good to get cooperation of City, County and Comcast to come together and work with us in the beginning - sharing equipment time space. Idea of bringing video content to station would be very easily worked out.	
7:42:21 PM	Dennis Lane	Would need 6-8 month lead time before there is a product ready to roll out. From there could see how production time could grow. For around \$100K could do initial it. Grant could be for more for some of the equipment. Looking at possibility of utilizing Channel 26 as gateway to a public channel using and existing channel. I think it is worth it. What about you?	

Description	Comcast Franchise Renewal Public Meeting #2 – 5/26/2010		
Date	5/26/2010	Location	Council Chambers
7:43:40 PM	Johnny Grames	<p>Asked Brian's name and affiliation. Answered. Has been trying to communicate with BTV-10 for eight years. Nothing happens. He is afraid to go over there. Dal will try to pick a fight and call cops and he will end up in jail. Marty Mulholland was witness. It was over videos he censors. When you talk about schools and education over PEG, BTV 10 won't play videos. It would be easy to do. Has been to City Council about it over these years. Russ Nelson was very accessible. He used to help and hope I did not help to get him fired. He played one as a parting shot. He played Ricky Otts(?) video and her presentation at Fairhaven college for three months. She was a personal friend and an expert on Exxon Valdez and. There should be a program on BP. Corporations are persons hiding behind theatre masks. Laws were passed and overturned in court. One of the reasons they don't practice safety and did what they did was that there was not access to information. They are unconcerned with anything except maximizing their profits. It should be about public service. BTV 10 & Comcast are only concerned about power. We can only change by voting. The school bonds had to ads on Comcast in order to sell their bonds. Influence on voter is through advertising - the lowest form of discourse. That also happened with the WTA tax. It was an initiative, which is direct democracy reserved for the people power. WTA representatives had a public hearing after the election. Those who were poor and can't afford to buy ads went and testified. But that was not videotaped and I think that was done intentionally. I testified but that only plays on Comcast cable.</p>	
7:51:08 PM	Johnny Grames	<p>About Comcast, he called Philadelphia about all this going on. They have millions of subscribers. Comcast is buying NBC where I get most of my news and from Democracy Now. Comcast pulled hundreds of public service announcements. Complained to PDC. They threw it out. Big lawfirm that represents Boeing and Democratic Party, Perkins Coie, it influenced the election and they were free. Attorney General sues Direct TV and the other TV station for illicit practices. That discredits BTV the main competition. Comcast is the only cable company in the ROW – that is public area. Has letter from Stan Finley to Marty Mulholland. The County's franchise agreement is also up. They make \$500K except \$200K goes to BTV10. They claim they are unregulated. Called FCC but they don't know what is going on here. Thought things would change with the new Administration. Bush just wanted to deregulate. Regulation is preventative. That's what makes oil spills, abuses of power. Comcast can do what it wants. The oil sands in Alberta...the pipeline runs through the City. This issue had a hearing at boathouse but it was not videotaped. He doesn't know how to get those issues on BTV10. We need that information to learn how to progress and change things in our community. Comcast is running BTV10. If there is no public debate then you have to buy ads on Comcast and they maximize their profits. They don't care. They decide our elections. You have to have a lot of money to run for office. All the higher education facilities in Bellingham and how are those people going to get to school and they can't watch any of the videos on BTV10 with some exceptions. I don't think anything is going to change unless we change the whole process. thank you.</p>	

Description	Comcast Franchise Renewal Public Meeting #2 – 5/26/2010		
Date	5/26/2010	Location	Council Chambers
7:58:43 PM	Janice	Invites Susanne Blaise and Robert Clark to speak. They decline.	
7:58:50 PM	Slide 13	Wrap up. Please encourage participation 360 so far. closes June 4. welcome input in all forms.	
7:59:58 PM	Adjourn		

C. EXHIBIT C – Other input from citizens

We received numerous contacts and here they are

1. Public Communications received via E-mail, Telephone, and Letter

Table 20: Public Communications received via E-mail, Telephone, and Letter

Comcast Cable Franchise Renewal Public Comments via email/letter/telephone		
Source	Location	Comments
Phone call	Inside City limits	<p>Husband is a retired Colonial, moved to Bellingham in 2002, they chose to live here and have found Bellingham is the greatest City in the country. They are seniors, live in a condo community for people 55 and older. They have two bedrooms and one television. When their Comcast service was installed, they place a box in the living room and second bedroom, though no television was ever connected in the bedroom. They eventually added telephone service.</p> <p>She was comparing cable prices with her neighbor one day when they discovered the Lewises are paying much more and noticed they were being charged for the second outlet though never used. For two years she has called "everyone in Comcast." Finally they were told about six months ago to take the box to the office, which they did including the remote still in its wrapper, unused. Husband asked for a receipt for the delivery of the unused box and the customer service representative would not provide a receipt.</p> <p>The billing for the additional, unused service stopped, Andree has been seeking a refund for the past many years of paying for something they didn't use. "I have never been so insulted in my life, with so many rude, abrupt people speaking to us." A few of them have said "we'll help you" but nothing has happened.</p>
Phone call	Inside City limits	<p>Very, very unhappy with it. You have to get these boxes. I was told I didn't need a box, then I was told I needed a box. I called Comcast, the man brought them over, I had to pay \$15. I used to turn on the TV and get any channel. Now with these boxes, it takes forever for TV to go on ... it takes forever and ever to change channels. I've talked to my lady friends, they are very unhappy with the TV since we got these boxes. I called Comcast and got a lady in Texas, she said there is a number on the box, get it and call me back but I never did. I was happy before the boxes, I would</p>

Comcast Cable Franchise Renewal Public Comments via email/letter/telephone		
Source	Location	Comments
		like to take them away. I don't need that many stations, I use very few stations.
Phone call	Inside City limits	<p>My price for Comcast is over \$60 per month. Even if I could afford it, I don't want some of it in my home. One weekend they gave us free HBO and we were flipping channels and saw a movie with naked people in a bowling alley. I have grandchildren, I don't want to be embarrassed. I do like the food network, the travel channels.</p> <p>Article says a person's bill may increase, though not necessarily by a large amount. My goodness, we don't need an increase. Their price is horrendous. For many of us that is our only means of entertainment. And now they want to up the cost?</p> <p>You flip channels and it is all paid programming. We are paying for it and we don't want it. She thinks she qualifies for senior/low-income discount, has never heard of it.</p> <p>We don't have customer service. We have a number to call, but you get out of town. If there are problems with cable in Bellingham, you can't tell them to turn to that channel to see the problem, because they are on a different system. Problems include pixilation and volume problems. Years ago, we had this kind of customer service. Now, they need to send someone out. But I say, the problem is not at my house, the problem is at Comcast.</p>
Phone call	Inside City limits	<p>I am very interested in reviving our discussions about PEG TV. We had talked about public access television when we first initiated BTW10. There were some concerns at that time about adding the "P" part. WWU appears to be interested in providing the "E" part. I understand others are interested in initiating the "P" part. Bellingham is in a media vacuum. We have one newspaper that is losing reporting staff and circulation, and not doing much of a job at all with local reporting. We have one corporation that owns all our radio stations, and their bias is relatively clear. Which means there is not a real voice for community activities and issues that Bellingham deals with. We are a well educated community, we have very involved neighborhood associations who can speak with each other on the internet, but would like to speak visually about issues using television. We have major growth issues, we have a university that is an enormous resource and should be far more involved in the community dialog. For all those reasons it is time to relook at public access television options. The issue of course is always money, but there may be ways to do that too. One thing we should negotiate is for an additional channel, so the "G" channel can stay on one channel and the "E" and "P" on another. Other cities have received funding for equipment and other start up costs.</p>
Phone	Inside City Limits	<p>I appreciate that the City has no control over Comcast or the FCC, but if you do, the programming really, really sucks. It has really changed, even since a year ago. It has really digressed; repeated old stuff, no movies, Law and Order runs day and night. They tell me they have no control over the networks. What happened at the start of this month is that the networks that have moved the timing of the good entertainment, they are on too late for me. That did not used to be the case; you used to be able to watch these good channels at a reasonable hour and then be able to go to bed. In the past you had an option to watch non-HD earlier. Now you have no option and it typically is later. When there are decent movies, they are now on too late to watch. They used to come on at 7 p.m. There is not much to watch and their prices haven't changed.</p>
Email	Inside City Limits	<p>City Council Members:</p> <p>You've probably received your weekly packet by now. In this week's edition is the renewal of the Cable Franchise Agreement. Allow me to point out a few items for your consideration.</p> <p>First, the explosive growth of "cable" in Bellingham is rather visible. Just look up over any street where utilities are not undergrounded – but wait even along the streets where the city has undergrounded street light lines and other utilities. Every day more and more chunks of thick black cable lines are appearing – count the number of lines over F Street between Alabama and</p>

Comcast Cable Franchise Renewal Public Comments via email/letter/telephone		
Source	Location	Comments
		<p>Girard.</p> <p>For those of us fortunate enough to live in an area where most of this is all underground, this ugly proliferation of blight is highly visible and does not, as some would suggest, just melt into the background. Cable and other companies use this cheap method because they can. They use (and misuse) the public space because they can under existing law. They string their cable lower and lower into street trees that were purposely designed not to interfere with the higher power lines. As a result these trees are butchered again and again into grotesque shapes to accommodate even thicker and more numerous lines. Have you driven along Boulevard? Check out the butchered trees.</p> <p>If the city is unable to control this blight, you might at least extract something of value under the franchise agreement. First, part of the franchise payment, say ½ of 1 percent of gross revenues should be collected into a fund exclusively used to underground these ugly eyesores. At least they ought to pay for replacement trees!</p> <p>Second, you might also require that the cable company provide, free of charge, Channel 10 services to all its competitors so that those of use who have a competing service can also have access to Channel 10. Based on the current economic models, the cable company will probably soon acquire their competitors anyway but it would be nice if they offered channel 10 to everyone in the local service area in the meantime.</p> <p>Finally, the utility tax we pay for the services we receive is high enough. the loss of community ambiance far exceeds the benefits of even more reality shows, 24 hour sales and advertisements for knives, or MTV.</p> <p>I know there is probably not much you can do, but make the effort anyway. If we are going to sell our souls to the cable company, we might as well bargain a little. What have we got to lose?</p>
Email	Inside City Limits	<p>I am writing in support of Comcast's request to renew their cable franchise with the city.</p> <p>Comcast recently switched our hotel over from analog to digital service, and that caused us a lot of trouble. Our guest complaints about using televisions went from "Zero" in six years to nearly 100 in a very short period of time.</p> <p>As can happen with large corporations, we had our share of frustration trying to get attention from the right person. Last Sunday night, I found the right person. Diana Scully, who is in charge of Multiple Dwelling Units for Comcast. She sent me an email right away Monday morning that was followed an hour later from our new account representative, Jamison Harris. He pledged to help us fix the problem and then kept his word.</p> <p>Over the next few days, he kept me fully informed by phone and email about the company's plan for changing out our equipment to solve the problem. At 10 Friday morning, just five days later, a Comcast crew arrived at the property to make the needed changes.</p> <p>They were polite, helpful and cleaned up after themselves.</p> <p>Again, it was a little rough to get our plight into focus, but the follow through we finally experienced makes it easy for me to support Comcast's request for franchise renewal with the City of Bellingham.</p>
Email	?	<p>... I might not be able to attend the meetings about Comcast on May 25 and 26.</p> <p>Will we ever have a competing cable company in Bellingham? The price we pay Comcast is too high, and there is no recourse except to have no cable at all.</p>

Comcast Cable Franchise Renewal Public Comments via email/letter/telephone		
Source	Location	Comments
		I have taken the survey. I think we could put up with everything else if they would just have available the 24 hr. feed for the ARTS on channel, ch. 26, which is free to them, instead of loading on advertisements and so called community announcements.
Email	?	When cable TV was first suggested, the reason given was that if you pay for subscription, you won't be forced to sit through commercials. Then greed took over and now we must sit through so many commercials it becomes abusive at some level. I want commercials either minimized or eliminated altogether in exchange for my subscription fee. I pay \$250.00 a month for internet and cable TV and I think that is also abusive. This needs to be remedied.
Email	?	<p>25 May 10</p> <p>Re: Comcast Service</p> <p>1. We have had cable service in other cities and I conclude that Comcast is better than the experience we had with other cable companies. We had a more complicated internet hookup than most, and they did a good job to accommodate our setup. They were prompt, courteous and left our house clean.</p> <p>2. My criticism is how cable is packaged for Whatcom subscribers. You have really only two options: basic cable or the whole works. I choose to use only basic because the premium package is very much more expensive and is totally uncontrolled in annual price hikes. I'm sure you have the figures to show that cable increases are greatly exceeding the annual rate of inflation.</p> <p>3. I would like the city to put some pressure on Comcast to have more options. In my case, I would start with basic and then sign up for some add-ons; like add ESPN, Fox Sport Network, and then maybe some movie channels. I don't see why we need to pay for shopping channels - - certainly, ads through newspapers, billboards, direct mail, radio, etc. are sufficient to get their message to the public.</p>
Email	?	<p>I've been involved with TAG for many years now (on the board for three), and Anna and Robin forwarded on to me your email to TAG.</p> <p>I've come into the Video world as a technology provider first (we've been doing webcasting around the world for over 7 years as Hardlines Company), and I pioneered Digital Video editing on the Mac into Bellingham back in the late 90's when I ran the local Apple Specialist). All this said, I wasn't focusing on content creation until just the past couple of years, and only sold my IT company at the end of March this year.</p> <p>Because of my webcasting focus, and early knowledge of digital capture and editing technologies, I've been lucky enough to meet a number of content creators throughout the area. And now I'm hiring some of them as contractors for work that we are doing nationally.</p> <p>Here's what I think about the Comcast Franchise Renewal:</p> <p>As TV and IDV (internet delivered video) merge into one entity, which I see as approximately 10 years out, but getting closer all the time, this becomes more and more relevant to local content creators.</p> <p>Most content creators (we have amazing numbers of them locally) are now producing everything in HD, and they're looking beyond TV for delivery. OTOH, they would love to have their friends/neighbors/parents/grandparents see their work, and having a HD channel on Comcast</p>

Comcast Cable Franchise Renewal Public Comments via email/letter/telephone		
Source	Location	Comments
		<p>that featured locally created content (besides city meetings!) would be fantastic. I think the city should keep BTV, but also require that Comcast have a second HD Channel (ideally below 20) that shows off local works. I would also recommend that the city have Comcast move BTV to HD - as in all honesty I can't watch anything that isn't HD anymore, and I know I'm not alone... :-) Once you go HD, everything else looks washed out and blurry!</p> <p>I think it's really too bad that we don't have a local community channel. There are so many talented content creators here, and they really should have their (HD) content featured on local TV. I know a number of them were really frustrated the last time that Comcast renewed their franchise and they didn't get the opportunity to have local content featured through a community channel.</p> <p>My recommendation is that a community channel (in HighDef/HD) be required from any cable franchise in Bellingham. Most other communities require this.</p> <p>I would even ask them to provide a modest budget for gear for a lending library and/or editing suite like Austin does. That would really help fledgling content creators.</p> <p>The future of video is democratization. We're seeing this today with local firms like Handcrank, Thinkatron, and 360 Productions doing fantastic work with modest budgets by going totally digital. This trend will only grow as technology drives gear pricing down and quality up. As the international corporations are disintermediated (and new ones form) by these changes, over time we'll see more and more people drop Cable. This is the time for the city to help our local content creators get a leg up on this coming change by giving them a place to show off their content and get attention paid to their work. You'll have less leverage in the future as more and more video is delivered via the Internet.</p> <p>WWU is also doing Content Creation, and our local high schools are too. This community channel would be a great way to feature student talent as well.</p> <p>Thanks very much for your time</p>
Letter	Outside City limits	<p>I live in WhatcomCounty and have been a subscriber to cable TV for the past 25 years. The service has gotten poorer as the price has gone up. I currently pay \$60.15 a month for BASIC and EXPANDED BASIC. That's \$2.00 per day.</p> <p>Since COMCAST took over the cable service there is no one to ask about a specific program. They tell you to contact the national network, but they do not have the addresses for the networks. Nor is there a LOCAL phone number to call!</p> <p>Yesterday I called the 888 # to just to check what would happen. I had to push 5 buttons to be told to push 4 more buttons. None of the buttons answered my specific questions!</p> <p>Is there no other company to bid on the Bellingham/Whatcom County service?</p> <p>Since COMCAST is a virtual monopoly in our area they don't care how the customers feel. It is up to the City Council to protect us from the monopoly!</p> <p>Thank you!</p>
Email	?	I watched the Public needs input related to a potential on the local PEG this last week end and

Comcast Cable Franchise Renewal Public Comments via email/letter/telephone		
Source	Location	Comments
		<p>wanted to provide my input. This is a classic David and Goliath^[1] contest or maybe more accurately Lilliputians verses the Cyclops^[2] contest.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Everything in these contract talks are weighted in Comcast's favor. They have a grand strategy as they move from City to City selling these contracts and grant scraps to Cities that they don't really care about to make the City feel good. o In contract talks Comcast indicates that they want to be flexible to the City's needs, but in dealing with cities individually rather than as a group, they use the divide and conquer strategy. o The Cities Consultant has dealt repeatedly with this group and should provide input about Comcast's negotiation themes, and what they believe the issues will be and the relative value. <p>My recommendations would be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Once the City has developed a primary list of needs a final public forum should be held to get input on the assessment. I don't believe that this will hurt our negotiations, because Comcast deals with the same issues in virtually every city. o The City should expect five percent (5%) of the gross revenues of the revenues and what is entitled should be spelled out very carefully. o The Comcast Contract should be at a maximum of five (5) years in duration instead of the current 15 years, and should end concurrent to other municipalities for increased leverage. o The signature of the contract renewal should not be done prior to resolution of any disputes that the City has with Comcast about the current contract. This would include that the resolution of all points contract Audit. o The contract should include language to ensure that Comcast uses reporting that adheres to local contacts unless the both parties mutually agree to switch to GAAP. o There should be a standing Citizen / City advisory Panel to monitor and penalize Comcast to ensure resolution of on going issues between citizens and the Vendor; i.e.; refunds for service outages. o One of your citizens has experience auditing cable companies, attempts to include her in the process would probably be to the Cities benefit. o Revise the contract to clarify franchise revocation and termination criteria and procedures. o Consider requiring a franchise performance bond. o There is no reason for Comcast to be charging an additional monthly fees for HD Channels. The cable industry has moved into the digital age, where one analog channel is equal in space to 10 cable channels, meaning that by switching to digital allows for Comcast to offer a higher number of total available channels in their lineup. o Comcast currently carries both analog and digital signals for its channel lineup. During the FCC transition to digital, Comcast assured the public that they would not need to do anything if they were already had their TVs connected to Comcast. However, the company has recently began the process of switching to an all-digital format. This requires televisions to be hooked up to either a digital cable box or a digital transport adapter (DTA). Comcast should provide as many of these devices as a homeowner needs rather than charging a fee, since this transition is a benefit to Comcast. o Finally, the Network gear and applications that support the local franchise is absolutely important. The city should have an understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The topology and equipment that is currently installed, o What replacements / upgrades are scheduled? o How the performance of the system is monitored? o On what basis equipment and applications will be upgraded? o I am sure that the Cities Technology Committee can think of more or better measures of support to our community.

Comcast Cable Franchise Renewal Public Comments via email/letter/telephone		
Source	Location	Comments
		<p>FYI: I spent a couple of hours on the internet looking at other cities request for public comments on their cable contract renewals. The ones that I found show fairly limited community response to these events. The primary themes of complaints related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The high cost of packages. o Repair Problems, delayed resolution and lack of refund. o Channel contained in package offerings, particularly basic service. o Changes made to price and content of packages o Dropping support for the Public Access Channel (PEG), including equipment, studio space or management services. o Throttling transfer speed and transmission caps. <p>~~~~~</p> <p>^[1] Comcast Named 'Worst Company in America' Published : Tuesday, 27 Apr 2010, 11:45 AM EDT</p> <p>The competition was stiff among airlines, credit card companies and car manufacturers. But the customers have spoken, and in the end they crowned Comcast as 2010's "Worst Company in America." The Philadelphia-based cable giant, known for its high costs, and nonexistent customer service, bested 31 other companies to win Consumerist's dubious Golden Poo Award .</p> <p>Comcast upset number-one-seeded Ticketmaster following a weekend of online voting by Consumerist.com visitors.</p> <p>Comcast had recently been a perennial bridesmaid in the "unpopularity" contest, which for the past five years has recognized the worst that business has to offer.</p> <p>Comcast finished as first runner-up in 2008 and 2009 to Countrywide Home Loans..</p> <p>"This year it is clear that poor customer service, among other issues by Comcast really rubbed consumers the wrong way," said Meghann Marco, co-managing editor of Consumerist.com, a watchdog blog acquired by Consumer Reports in 2008.</p> <p>For six weeks, voters in the bracket-style, single-elimination tournament, modeled after the NCAA basketball tournament, whittled down the 32 nominees in head-to-head match-ups .</p> <p>Consumers were able to log on to Consumerist.com and participate in each round of the "Worst Company in America," as well as chime in through comments on the site.Besides Ticketmaster, Comcast's reviled rivals included Bank of America, Cash4Gold, GM, CapitalOne, and U.S. Airways.</p> <p>In response to the "honor," Comcast spokeswoman Jenni Moyer told The Washington Post that the telecom firm is "working everyday to improve our customers' experiences with us." She pointed to a new Comcast "customer guarantee," as well as recent improvements to product reliability and service.</p> <p>Consumerist.com plans to deliver the Golden Poo Award to Comcast's Philadelphia headquarters. Moyer did not say where the small sculpture would be displayed.</p> <p>^[2] Wikipedia informs who this Cyclops called Comcast is - Comcast serves a total of 24.6 million</p>

Comcast Cable Franchise Renewal Public Comments via email/letter/telephone		
Source	Location	Comments
		<p>cable customers, 16.3 million digital cable customers, 14.4 million high-speed Internet customers, and 5.6 million voice customers.</p> <p>Comcast Reach – It not only delivers third-party programming content to its own customers, but also produces content that is delivered to both its subscribers and customers of other competing television services. This is a way to diversify Comcast's revenue to both sides of the content/delivery equation. Fully- or partially-owned Comcast programming includes CN8, Comcast SportsNet, SportsNet New York, MLB Network, Comcast Sports Southeast/Charter Sports Southeast, E! Entertainment, Style Network, G4, Versus, The Golf Channel, AZN Television, and FEARnet. Further, it has a controlling 51% stake in NBC Universal.</p> <p>Comcast claims to have more HD choices than DirecTV by including Comcast's on-demand and pay-per-view assets. Each HD on-demand program is counted as an HD "choice" by Comcast.</p> <p>Comcast Financial performance - Over the past ten years (to 2009), Comcast has achieved a financial record that is, according to one analyst, "not unimpressive". The book value of the company nearly doubled from \$8.19 a share in 1999 to \$15 a share in 2009. Revenues grew six fold from 1999's \$6 billion to almost \$36 billion in 2009. Net profit margin rose from 4.2% in 1999 to 8.4% in 2009, with operating margins improving 31 percent and return on equity doubling to 6.7 percent in the same time span. Between 1999 and 2009, return on capital nearly tripled to 7 percent.</p> <p>Lobbying efforts - Analysis indicates that Comcast spends millions of dollars annually on government relationships. Regularly Comcast employs the spouses, sons and daughters of influential mayors, councilmen, commissioners, and other officials to assure its continued preferred market allocations.</p> <p>~~~~~</p> <p>(This individual's comments continued in additional email)</p> <p>http://www.epi.org/economic_snapshots/entry/webfeatures_snapshots_20080423/ U.S. lags behind in broadband infrastructure - Ian Townson</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The United States currently ranks 15th of the 30 developed countries in overall penetration... 2. The United States has also fallen behind other countries in the deployment of new broadband technologies. For example, over 35% of Japan's internet connections are fiber optic, whereas only 3% of U.S. connections are fiber optic. Average broadband download speeds are hitting 61-megabits per second in Japan, while the average in the United States is only 1.9-megabits per second. <p>http://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/news/2007/05/survey-average-broadband-speed-in-us-is-1-9mbps.ars CWA survey: average broadband speed in US is 1.9Mbps</p> <p>We also consistently pay more for our slower connections than those in other countries. As long as the government continues to make decisions that seem to work against consumers in this area—for example, not requiring cable and DSL providers to share their lines—Americans will continue to be stuck with subpar broadband speeds and prices</p> <p>President Obama has made broadband deployment one of the key tenets of his "ICT policy." For</p>

Comcast Cable Franchise Renewal Public Comments via email/letter/telephone		
Source	Location	Comments
		<p>the first time in a generation, the United States is seriously considering the use of public funds along with incentives and tax credits to ensure that no American is left behind. Rural broadband deployment might be the beneficiary of public funding in particular.</p> <p>http://www.usiia.org/pubs/United_States.pdf Connectivity Scorecard 2009: United States</p> <p>5.5 A major challenge for the United States is education. The country arguably produces too few graduates in Science and Engineering, and a very high share of PhD graduates are foreign citizens. While relaxation of visa and immigration rules may help the short-term US position, longer-term the US needs to grapple with the uncomfortable fact that it is one of the few nations in which the 25-34 age group is less well-educated than preceding age groups.</p> <p>5.6 Being an innovator has always been the source of the US' wider strengths in ICT and computing. Education policy and worker training policies ought to be given highest priority. In fact the message of the Connectivity Scorecard 2009 to the incoming administration is that in order for the United States to remain on top it needs to do more than just spend large sums of money on infrastructure and public works. It needs to ensure that it invest in the "smarts" that will enable effective utilization of the infrastructure. For a long time, the country had much higher tertiary education rates than most of its counterparts. This is no longer the case, and the fact that there are striking disparities in educational attainment across regions, ethnic groups, and income levels is further cause for concern.</p> <p>The Scorecard reflects current strengths built on the back of past investment. The future looks more uncertain for the United States.</p> <p>http://conft.com/en/US/products/ps7060/products_category_technologies_overview.html Technology Overview - See why Cisco TelePresence makes sense for your business. Discover how Cisco TelePresence is different than other solutions. As convergence brings voice, data, and video onto the same network, new technologies are rewriting the rules about collaboration, and not a moment too soon.</p> <p>Globalization increases the need for communication among colleagues and partners. Business discussions encompass not only multiple people but also multiple locations. While today's meeting and collaboration tools provide a significant productivity boost, they are not a substitute for in-person meetings. Videoconferences, in particular, are often difficult to set up, challenging to use, and do not adequately replicate the benefits of face-to-face interaction.</p> <p>To improve this situation, Cisco TelePresence creates an "in-person" meeting experience over the converged network. Cisco TelePresence delivers real-time, face-to-face interactions between people and places in their work and personal lives using advanced visual, audio, and collaboration technologies. These technologies transmit life-size, high-definition images and spatial discrete audio. Now it's easier than ever to discern facial expressions for crucial business discussions and negotiations across the "virtual table."</p> <p>Audio/Visual Technology Cisco TelePresence incorporates the latest standards and technologies to offer the best audio and visual results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •H.264 video codecs to offer the highest quality and lowest bit rate •Session Initiation Protocol •Native 720p and 1080p high-definition cameras •Native 720p and 1080p high-definition encoding/decoding •Low-latency architecture and low bandwidth utilization •Wideband advanced audio coding with low delay (AAC LD)

Comcast Cable Franchise Renewal Public Comments via email/letter/telephone		
Source	Location	Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Multichannel spatial audio with echo cancellation and interference filters to eliminate feedback from mobile devices •Optimized environmental conditioning to provide the best audio and video and overall user experience <p>Network</p> <p>Cisco TelePresence uses the standard IP technology deployed in corporations today and runs on an integrated voice, video, and data network. The system supports high-quality, real-time voice and video communications with branch offices using broadband connections. It offers capabilities for ensuring quality of service (QoS), security, reliability, and high availability for high-bandwidth applications such as video — particularly high-definition video, which can require 1 Mbps to 5 Mbps, depending on the resolution.</p> <p>Hardware-Optimized Environment</p> <p>The system includes purpose-built office furniture that incorporates cameras and displays, lighting, speakers, microphones, and projection capability into a specially designed table for larger rooms, or, in smaller configurations, into existing office furniture.</p> <p>Software Applications</p> <p>Cisco TelePresence applications incorporate a variety of new and existing standards-based software for accommodating converged voice and video transmissions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •IP telephony — Cisco TelePresence works with IP-based phones. This can simplify launching calls because it uses a telephone instead of a complicated remote control. •Groupware — Integration with enterprise groupware solutions (such as Microsoft Outlook and Lotus Notes) accommodates easy scheduling of meetings and access to corporate information. •Services — Cisco TelePresence enables easy scheduling, management, reporting, billing, and metrics applications to ensure proper tracking and bill-back of activity on the system, as well as real-time support services. <p>http://www.engadget.com/2010/05/04/worlds-first-remote-heart-surgery-completed-in-leicester-uk/</p> <p>World's first remote heart surgery completed in Leicester, UK By Joseph L. Flatley posted May 4th 2010 12:18PM</p> <p>In the past, we've seen robots remove brain tumors and even transplant a kidney or two, and now a cardiologist has completed the world's first remote heart operation at Glenfield Hospital in Leicester, UK. Using the Remote Catheter Manipulation System built by New Jersey's Catheter Robotics, Dr. Andre Ng was able to insert electrodes attached to catheters into the heart through blood vessels in the groin. One of the challenges surgeons traditionally face with this kind of procedure is prolonged exposure to the X-Rays used to monitor the patient. By operating remotely, doctors can avoid fatigue and cumulative radiation exposure -- not to mention those bulky lead aprons. "As long as the connection is reliable," Ng told the Financial Times, the operation could be performed over the Internet from anywhere in the world. Just the same, we'd prefer it if our doctor was at least in the same building as he shoved electrodes into out hearts. Don't we at least deserve that much?</p> <p>Telepresence Unique, "In-Person" Meetings - Accelerate Decision Making http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=AGJP0XV7708C&oi=fnd&pg=RA1-PA174&dq=%27telepresence+education%22&ots=hUD102jpX1&sig=VssZrtAEMKfeWvoaebMgB9v279k#v=onepage&q='telepresence%20education%22&f=false</p> <p>Telepresence Surgery System enhances Medical student Surgery Training http://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&q=%27telepresence+education%22&btnG=Search&as</p>

Comcast Cable Franchise Renewal Public Comments via email/letter/telephone		
Source	Location	Comments
		<p>sdt=400000000000&as_ylo=&as_vis=0</p> <p>Telepresence Support for Synchronous Distance Education Juliana Restrepo and Helmuth Trefftz Dept. of Computer Science P.O. Box 703 Medellin, Colombia jrestre@eafit.edu.co, htrefftz@eafit.edu.co</p> <p>ited by several factors. Firstly, institutions offering good education are concentrated in the larger cities, and further-more, in the richest neighborhoods. Secondly, rural areas are isolated by lack of infrastructure and, in some cases, by the violence related to civil war. For this circumstances, only a very small percentage of the population has access to the high quality education. This forms a vicious circle in which poor people have less opportunities to improve their conditions because they live in isolated regions. This paper reports the construction and evaluation of a tool that combines multimedia (bi-directional audio and video) with a shared virtual environment. The current re-sults show that this tool allows students in distance education to attain good levels of understanding. Wide use of this tool would allow students in isolated regions to receive good quality education, taught by the best instructors, regardless of their location. The necessary technology needed for running the application described in this paper, namely computers and tele-phone lines, are readily available in the vast majority of the country. Telephone lines are provided by regional telephone companies and computers are being donated by large companies that donate the PCs that are replaced, motivated by tax bene`ts. Even computers that are 2 or 3 years old have graphics cards and multimedia peripherals that are capable of running the telepresence application.</p>
Email	?	<p>Hello Janice,</p> <p>It was good to talk with you this morning. I look forward to meeting you in person.</p> <p>Seems like the mood in this world is pretty hostile. People are tired of getting fleeced and bled, whether it's the government or business. When I talk to people, it's frustration and anger all over this country.</p> <p>Here's a little something to grab a hold of and make a dent in the wall. While I'm sick of the time and effort I put into Comcast while they provided my cable and internet, this is a symptom of a bigger problem. The problem is exclusive contracts within a city. No business should enjoy exclusive rights to do business. I don't care what business it is and what service it provides. An exclusive right diminishes performance and increases costs to the People.</p> <p>This brings into play another issue: the rights of the People. Business has no rights. People are the only entity with rights. Government has certain powers, limited and numbered. Not one word of our Constitution mentions business. Further, the Constitution states that there shall be no titles of nobility. In our modern language, this means there shall be no priveledge granted by government to anyone or anything. It's pretty obvious what priveledge given to banks has done to our economy.</p> <p>Without being rude, it is the duty of the Council to represent the People. Not Comcast. It is in the best interest of the People that the Council cancels all City contracts and opens the door to all business to serve the People.</p> <p>Why not start with cable service?</p>

Comcast Cable Franchise Renewal Public Comments via email/letter/telephone		
Source	Location	Comments
		Kind Regards,
Letter	Inside City limits	<p><i>Mailed packet of materials, including examples of Comcast materials, internet article, handwritten survey response, handwritten note with points below:</i></p> <p>Absolutely NOT, do not sign a 15-year franchise agreement with Comcast!!</p> <p>Hard to believe the City of Bellingham would spend \$69,250 of the taxpayer's money to hire Minnesota based law firm Moss & Barnett to work on the negotiations with Comcast.</p> <p>Please read "Congratulations Comcast, You're the Worse Company in America" By Chris Morran on April 26, 2010 (document provided in hard copy)</p> <p>My phone has been ringing off, after my grandson and I made comments just how bad Comcast services are in Bellingham and across the USA. All phone calls agreeing how bad their services are. We live in condo across the street from Comcast Office on Cordata Street. Their office didn't answer their phones!! They do not respond to complaints. Their phone number is not in the Bellingham phone book.</p> <p>Qwest gave excellent service in the three years, then AT&T took over and their service was excellent in their 3 years too. (No problems of any kind)</p> <p>With Comcast my monthly statement has gone from \$83 per month to \$169. In addition we pay in one month advance before receiving anything.</p> <p>Now Comcast has come up with a new name XFINITY & now charges as follows:</p> <p>Bundled services: \$10</p> <p>TV: \$58.90</p> <p>Internet: \$57.95</p> <p>Voice: 43.24</p> <p>Taxes, surcharges and fees: \$9.44</p> <p>Total new charges: 159.53</p> <p>Now received XFINITY New Installation & Equipment Pricelist all prices exclude applicable franchise fees, regulatory fee and taxes.</p> <p>I received today a special offer for XFINITY internet customers, for \$40 per month, call and get \$100 off with a one-year commitment!</p> <p>Today received another comment from a Comcast customer – as follows: "Is this signs of the times of a company of poor management in our county looking for a bail out from City of Bellingham along with other cities in USA? Ben Stein you're a smart businessman. Do you agree or not agree?"</p>

2. E-mail Petition Received Endorsing Public Access

An email petition encouraging people to “vote yes for public access television” was circulated and received by the City.

Table 21: E-mail Petition Endorsing Public Access Television

Comcast Cable Franchise Renewal Public Comments	
Email petition	
Source	Text of E-mail Petition
<p>Originated by: DENNIS LANE KAY SARDO SUZANE BLAIS WILSON LARGE</p> <p>“Yes” votes: Letters endorsed by and/or forwarded by or sent email that indicates “yes vote” for public access:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Korry Harvey 2. Nicholas Mele 3. Mary Mele 4. Michael Falter 5. Pamela D. Wilson 6. Shirley Osterhaus 7. George & Barbara Rofkar 8. Julie Mauermann 9. Jerry Swann 10. Dennis OShaughnessy 	<p>VOTE YES FOR PUBLIC ACCESS TELEVISION</p> <p>This year 2010, the Bellingham and Whatcom County Cable Franchise comes up for local renewal. This 15 year contract will probably be the last chance for the creation of a publicly run video platform. Over the next 5 - 15 years technology will have change so much. That what we know as cable broadcast today may not be recognizable tomorrow. If that's so then gone could would be our chance to create a viable community/public television connection. In a last ditch effort to make Public Access Television possible, we are asking for your participation. We want you to check YES and forward this E-mail to City Hall. Next, we want you to send this E-mail to two of your friends and ask them to check YES and forward to City Hall and pass this E-mail forward.</p> <p>Over the last 15 years, we have seen local television (Channel 10) grow to be a comprehensive video platform for local government information. People are better informed about the various city departments, growth, development, public safety and the enjoyment of our greenways. Isn't it about time to give the local community/ neighborhoods of Bellingham a public video platform too. A community broadcast platform that speaks not just of the City but to/for the many community organizations and schools. A video media platform that gives local people. ... a public voice.</p> <p>Ours is an enriched community filled with active social connections and heart felt humanity for each other and our environment. This is seen through our outreach in cleaning the rivers and salmon enhancement, providing low cost volunteer interfaith healthcare , to raising farmland food for local food banks. All this speak about the heart of this community. These moment are very much who we are and are worth a thousand words. So let's provide images to our action. This could be a great reminder about the positive side of our community. VOTE YES FOR PUBLIC ACCESS TELEVISION and make this happen now.</p> <p>We'd love to fill City Hall with our response. Take a moment and fill this out and help our local history move forward. Be sure to pass this e-mail on to two friends. Thank you much So check the box below and forward it to: JKeller @cob.org</p> <p>VOTE YES FOR PUBLIC ACCESS TELEVISION Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

D. EXHIBIT D – Public Access Television Proposal from WCTC

The City received the following proposal from WCTC on June 8, 2010.
(Proposal on following 5 pages.)

Whatcom Community Television and Communication (WCTC)
Dennis Lane, Executive Director
dlaneksp@earthlink.net 360.715.3594

Whatcom Community Television and Communications (WCTC) wants to work with the City of Bellingham, Whatcom County, Comcast and the local community in the creation of a public community video broadcast platform. Initially, 56 hours a month of public and educational video will be broadcast over Channel 26 . There will be 2 hours a day of broadcast from 6 PM to 8 PM weekly. These broadcasts will represent the beginning of a Community/Education Channel Project. WCTC believes that within a five year period. Using the 2 hour base, we can develop in the first two years to the capability and implementation of a full Public Access broadcast channel in 5 years. After 5 years, the station should have in place the necessary growth in content and community participation.

Funding:

This P/A video project would require the balance of the City of Bellingham Cable Franchise fee (.75% of 1%) of \$120,000.00. These initial dollars will serve as working capital funding and leverage in the solicitation of other funding. In the third year the County will also be asked for .75% of 1% from the Whatcom County Cable Franchise fee. The third and fourth year will be the final steps as the project expands toward completion. In the first and third year Capitalization/buildout dollars will be solicited from Comcast according to be stipulated in the upcoming Cable Franchise Agreement.

Content:

In the first year, a Community/Educational video platform will have to establish video production infrastructures and venues. All this must be done before we begin our own actual production of video content. Video content, for local broadcast, will come from three main sources (the community, educational and some outside sources). Local professionals, video festival content, nonprofit organizations, local libraries, etc. are some of the ideas of community content. Educational content will cover a wide expanse from video class work (GED,ESL videos), high school and university/community college student project and POV, to the journey of elementary and middle school students. Some of the outside content will be made up of sharing video programing with other PEG facilities. Local business will be asked to sponsor some of the video programing. Organizations and local people will be responsible for their own content and will be the producers of their own show. The station will work with local organizations and city government to produce video forums or specials that can focus on some of the things in our community.

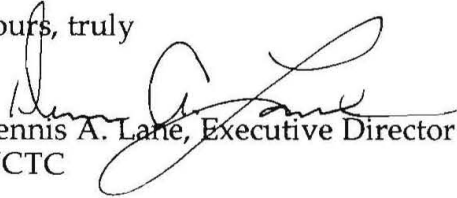
Conclusion:

Presently, WCTC is establishing contact with the Pickford Movie complex. The Pickford is in the midst of renovations and are offering rental spaces at the complex. This may allow us to modify our office and studio space to suit our production and space needs. The Pickford would make an excellent space and media partner. With location in downtown Bellingham and in close proximity to transition of GP, the Pickford is in a prime location. The ideal location makes the possibility of joint venture between WCTC and the Pickford possible. It wouldn't be too far an idea about the creation of a business/public media center for the downtown area. A Tech Cafe with computers,video screenings,food and small

private production rooms. Profits could defray costs for both the P/A station and the Pickford.

WCTC has put together this proposal with in the parameters of the existing City and County Cable Franchise Fees and has shown how through possible joint partnerships some degree of sustainability can be achieved. This proposal has tried to convince you of why the community needs a Public Access station and how it can be achieved. I think this presentation should leave the door open for further discussion and hope the the city of Bellingham can help make this happen. Thank you for taking the time in reading and giving this proposal consideration.

Yours, truly



Dennis A. Lane, Executive Director
WCTC

Evolutionary Steps: After a 3 - 4 year period both jobs will be merged into the job of the Station Manager. Salary would increase from \$35,000.00 to \$45,000.00 in year 4 and \$50,000.00 in year 5. The remain dollars will used as stipend salaries for temporary staff positions.

- Equipment:	
- Cameras (2)	\$ 6,400.00
- (1) Studio Camera, @ \$3,200.00	
- (1) ENG Camera @ \$3,200.00	
- 2 additional batteries @ \$100.00	\$ 200.00
- 4 San discs memmory @ \$200.00 ea	\$ 800.00
- 2 Camera bags @ \$150.00 ea.	\$ 300.00
- 2 S-vid Camera Cable @ \$100.00ea.	\$ 300.00
- Tripod (2 heavy duty) @ \$150.00	\$ 300.00
- Lights: (light kit / 3-5 setup) (heavy duty light stands)	\$ 500.00
- All in one switcher @ \$4,600.00	\$ 4,600.00
- 5 -7" video monitors @ \$300.00 ea.	\$ 1,500.00
- Cables @ \$1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
- Computer (graphics/ Etc.)@ \$2000.00	\$ 2,000.00
- Audio speakers (monitor) @ \$300.00	\$ 300.00
- Microphones:	
- Lapel Mics (3) @\$200.00 per mic	\$ 600.00
- Standard Mics: (- 3 Shure) @\$ 80.00	\$ 240.00
- Mic Stands (3) @ \$100.00	\$ 300.00
- Production studio mics & cables	\$ 1,000.00
- Video discs costs	\$?????

FIRST YEAR TOTAL P/A COST	\$114,840,00
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Timeline:

- 1st - 2nd Year:
 - 6-8 Month;
 - outreach & education
 - setup office space & production studio
 - create and gather video content
 - setup cooperative arrangement with Channel 10, the City & Comcast about temporary use of studio facilities
 - training of video production volunteers
 - training local producers
 - 10 - 14 months;
 - setup small 1-2 camera portable video studio
 - setup community media review board
 - setup guideline and station procedures
 - set up post and screening equipment
 - all videos will be screened before broadcast
 - ON THE AIR (10 - 12 mo.)
- 3rd - 5th Year:
 - Increase in video program outreach
 - Lummi/ Nooksack Tribal Programs
 - Development of local Sport highlights (some games)
 - Gospel/Choir Specials
 - Public Voices and Comments
 - Technology and You
 - Education
 - Building a larger production studio (2-3Camera)
 - Overhead light grid
 - Professional audio and video board
 - ETC.

BUDGET:

- Space: (2) Studio/Office	\$19,500.00
- Office, \$600.00 per mo. x 12 +	\$ 7,500.00
- Studio, @ \$1000.00 per mo. x 12mo.	\$12,000.00
 - Staff:	
Oversight, management, evaluation fee (OME)	\$ 5,000.00
Facilitator/ Outreach Manager	\$35,000.00
Station Tech.	\$35,000.00
Total	\$75,000.00

E. EXHIBIT E – Input from Public Education Organizations

Quick intro

- 1. Communications related to interest in Higher Education E channel and operation – letters and communications from WWU and UW officials**

Letters from WWU and UW officials follow (next 8 pages)



An equal opportunity university

Vice President for University Relations

516 High Street
Bellingham, Washington 98225-9032
(360) 650-3482

May 20, 2010

Mayor Dan Pike
City of Bellingham
210 Lottie Street
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear Mayor Pike,

Educational channels are available in many communities through our country, providing a valuable service to viewers of all ages and backgrounds. We know from conversations with colleagues around the country that programming developed by institutions of higher education are valued by communities, including prospective students, families, alumni and professionals who watch to strengthen their skills and broaden their understanding and horizons.

I am pleased to report that Western Washington University is in exciting conversations with our colleagues and partners at the University of Washington, and especially with leadership of their television channel, UWTV. We propose to work in partnership to program and deliver an educational channel featuring content from both our institutions. We are requesting that the City of Bellingham include in their negotiations for the renewal of the cable franchise, a request for an additional channel dedicated to educational purposes. We understand that as the franchising authority, the City of Bellingham has the opportunity to make such a request for an Educational access channel.

In addition to providing a vibrant learning environment for our students, Western is committed to sharing the research, scholarship and artistic and athletic endeavors of our talented faculty and students with the larger community. Much of the work we do here on the Western campus directly benefits our environment, our economy and the quality of life here in Bellingham and around our state. We hope to share more of this with our friends and neighbors in Bellingham and the surrounding area.

We hope that you agree that including programming from Western Washington University and the University of Washington on the Bellingham cable system would be a welcome addition to the quality of programming available to the people of this special city. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Swan".

Steve Swan
Vice President for University Relations

Cc: Marty Mulholland ✓



Vice President for University Relations

516 High Street
Bellingham, Washington 98225-9032
(360) 650-3482 Fax (360) 650-7685

June 29, 2010

Mayor Dan Pike and Bellingham City Council Members,
C/O Marty Mulholland, Director of I.T. Services
City of Bellingham
625 Halleck Street
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear Mayor Pike and Bellingham City Council Members:

I am writing to you on behalf of Western Washington University regarding our joint request with the University of Washington that the City of Bellingham include in their negotiations for the renewal of the cable franchise a request for an additional channel dedicated to educational purposes. We understand that as the franchising authority, the City of Bellingham has the opportunity to make such a request for an Educational access channel.

Educational channels are available in many communities throughout our state and country, providing a valuable service to viewers of all ages and backgrounds. We know from conversations with colleagues around the country that programming developed by institutions of higher education is valued by communities, including prospective students, families, alumni, professionals and other members of the general public who watch to strengthen their skills and broaden their understanding and horizons.

Here in Bellingham we are fortunate to be home to one of the premier higher education institutions of its kind in the country in Western Washington University. In addition to providing a vibrant learning environment for our students, Western is committed to sharing the research, scholarship and artistic and athletic endeavors of our talented faculty and students with the larger community. Much of the work we do here on the Western campus directly benefits our environment, our economy and the quality of life here in Bellingham and around our state. We hope to share more of this with our friends and neighbors here in Bellingham through an educational cable channel.

Bellingham is also blessed to be located in close proximity to the state's flagship university, the University of Washington, which is regarded by many as the top research institution in the nation. The UW, which is Western's partner in this proposal, has built a state of the art television operation and a substantial library of educational video programs that make it a tremendous asset for television viewers. We are very excited about the possibility of being a partner with the UW in an educational channel.

Western Washington University is committed to providing educational channel programming that is of high quality in both content and production quality. Unlike the UW, Western is not experienced in e-channel programming, but it does understand the need for quality presentations that meet the expectations of viewers who crave quality educational programming.

Because it is an established entity in the television production field, it is our understanding that no capital expenditures will be required by UWTV to submit its programming to Comcast, as it already sends its signal to Comcast's primary Washington head-end, which is located in Burien, and sends programming around the state. In addition, UW programming is available for free from a KU-band satellite, and it is working with Western on an inexpensive method to downlink the signal to WWU. As WWU and UW develop policy and technical plans for submitting joint programming, there may be a need for some expenditure to accomplish the switching from one program stream to the other. It is planned that this equipment and function will be housed at Western and that any capital costs needed in this area will be requested by WWU from the city from the Comcast franchise fees.

Western's efforts in video production in the past have been limited by outdated equipment and facilities. Because of its desire to offer programming that is of the highest content and technical quality, Western is prepared to authorize the use of more than \$163,000 in one-time university funds to purchase high quality production equipment. As you are aware because of the budget challenge the city and all other public entities are currently dealing with, this would be a major commitment on the part of WWU to help make the E-channel a reality. This equipment would replace the current outdated equipment that is planned to be housed in a new facility that is being constructed as a part of a remodeling of Haggard Hall on the WWU campus.

The other challenge Western faces is in the area of production staff and it is our hope that the City of Bellingham can authorize the use of cable contract revenues to help Western hire staff which is needed to bring quality e-channel programming to life. With the loss of 174 positions in budget cuts in the past year, WWU is short staffed in its video production operation as it is in other areas across campus.

Western is submitting a priority based request that totals \$118,100 that it is respectfully asks the City of Bellingham to consider funding for from cable contract revenue. The request breaks down as follows:

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Funding for a 1.0 FTE Video Production Assistant | \$ 65,000 |
| 2. Funding for a 0.5FTE Production Producer | \$ 43,100 |
| 3. Funding for annual equipment replacement | \$ 10,000 |

The Video Production Assistant position is critically important to achieving the goal of a high quality Educational channel. This person would oversee technical aspects of channel programming, assist in video productions from pre-production through post-production, supervise student and support staff and provide maintenance of equipment. The half-time Production Producer is highly desirable and would add the extra insurance for quality and be the lead on video productions and would work with clients to develop scripts, storyboards, shot lists; direct production teams during video shoots; and direct and participate in post-

production editing. Funding assistance for FTE is also important because Western would be the controlling site that would select which location (WWU or UW) was feeding content to the cable provider and this person would coordinate this effort. The funding for annual replacement of equipment is necessary to keep equipment current in the rapidly changing world of communication delivery.

Please know that Western is truly excited to be in partnership with the University of Washington in this project to create a new Educational channel for the people of Bellingham. We believe the combined programming content of our two universities, as well as potential contributions from other higher educational institutions in the area, will be most valuable additions to the large percentage of the population in Bellingham that thrives on lifelong learning and quality educational enrichment.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional information on a new Educational Channel to the City of Bellingham as it negotiates a new cable contract for the city.

Sincerely,

Steve Swan
Vice President for University Relations



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
BOARD OF REGENTS

June 15, 2010

RECEIVED
JUN 18 2010
EXECUTIVE
DEPARTMENT

Honorable Mayor Dan Pike and Bellingham City Council Members

City of Bellingham

210 Lottie St

Bellingham, WA 98225

RE: WWU and UWTV

Dear Mayor Pike and Bellingham City Council Members:

I am writing at the urging of WWU and as a citizen of Bellingham. As you may know, I serve on the Board of Regents of the University of Washington and am also a proud alumnus of Western Washington University. I am delighted that these two great state institutions of higher learning are working together to propose a new educational television channel for the Bellingham area. This is a phenomenal opportunity for our community to capture new value from our public higher education system. UWTV has provided a great service to many communities around our state for more than 10 years. The station provides programming across a variety of disciplines, giving audiences insights and information for personal enrichment and professional development, and programming that encourages our young people to pursue higher education.

UWTV programs have also provided continuing professional development to computer science professionals, environmental scientists, physicians, nurses and other allied health professionals, as well as those who provide social services to Washington residents. Many of the medical programs are also aimed at a general audience and provide public education about common health problems and the current state of research on effective treatments. New programming planned for Fall 2010 includes a series on business leadership from the UW Foster School of Business, as well as a general news program featuring research advances from various departments.

UWTV now includes collegiate sports in its schedule, recently featuring the nationally prominent UW women's softball program. Starting again this fall, they will bring the UW football coach back live for his Monday press conferences and more sports programming is planned for later in the year. The Husky Classics series, featuring great football, basketball and baseball games from the past has already proven popular and will be continuing. I'm sure that young athletes and local sports fans will find this coverage both entertaining and inspiring.

My friends and colleagues at Western Washington University tell me that they too have several ideas for programs of interest to our city and its residents, and that this collaboration will enable them to be brought into fruition. I look forward to supporting this partnership as the two institutions work to program a channel that provides high quality service to our citizens.

Please accept this letter as my wholehearted endorsement of this unique partnership and request to include a new channel on Comcast's offering to local cable subscribers. I believe this addition will be of

Mayor Pike and City Council – Page 2

tremendous value to our city, our local families and their K-12 students, as well as to those professionals who will find enrichment for their skills through this outreach effort from these two first-class institutions.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let me know if I can be of assistance to you in this matter.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Cole', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Craig Cole
Regent

cc: President Bruce Shepard, WWU

President Mark Emmert, UW



UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

June 16, 2010

The Honorable Dan Pike, Mayor of Bellingham and
Bellingham City Council Members
City of Bellingham
210 Lottie St
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear Mayor Pike and Bellingham City Council Members,

The University of Washington (UW) is very pleased to join with Western Washington University (WWU) to request the addition of an Educational channel to Bellingham's cable television services. Here at the UW, we are fortunate to have had many years to build a television operation and develop a substantial library of educational video programs. We very much look forward to the opportunity to share this programming with the greater Bellingham community, which includes several thousand UW alumni as well as many current UW students and parents. We are also pleased that this would give us an opportunity to work cooperatively with WWU in support of their efforts to expand their own television services and video communications. We have great respect for WWU and their achievements in the Pacific Northwest, particularly in working to bring economic vitality to the Bellingham region.

I would also like to respond to a request for more information regarding the UW/WWU proposal itself. Together, our two universities are proposing to provide a full-time educational channel with original programming from both institutions. This channel would be programmed 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. While there would be some repetition of programs, this is a normal state of affairs on all cable channels and in fact provides an important service to the audience, giving them more opportunities to watch the programs. UWTV has been in operation for more than ten years. We are ready and able to provide full-time programming at any time, and will work with our colleagues at WWU to incorporate their programming in a time-frame that works best for them.

UWTV is already distributed by Comcast in many communities across the state. Our signal is available both from satellite and from Comcast's fiber-optic network. While we have not yet worked out the precise route and method of transmission of UWTV's signal to WWU or Comcast's head end that serves Bellingham, we believe the availability of the UWTV signal at Comcast's primary head-end in Burien or from our Ku-band satellite, means that transmission to Bellingham can be accomplished quickly and easily at zero or very minimal cost to Western Washington University. These two options make possible a variety of methods of building a programming schedule for the Bellingham region. As plans develop, we will keep the City of Bellingham informed.

Box 351232 214 Gerberding Hall Seattle, WA 98195-1232
tel 206.616-8965 fax 206.616.1784 washington.edu/externalaffairs



UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

We are also willing to incorporate programming from other educational institutions in the Bellingham region into the new channel. WWU is likely to be the central clearinghouse and distribution point for local Bellingham programming, so we will defer to them in this regard.

In closing, I would like to reiterate how pleased we are at the UW to be in partnership with our colleagues at Western to propose a new Educational channel for the Bellingham cable service. We believe that the content we both have to offer television audiences in Bellingham is valuable for many groups in the community. Here at UW we are fortunate to have physicians, researchers, and scholars who are contributing to answers to many of the world's most pressing problems. We look forward to the opportunity to share these discoveries and insights with all residents in the state of Washington who help support our institution and to partnering with WWU on this venture – as we do in many research projects and educational innovations.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any further information as the City of Bellingham enters into discussions with Comcast regarding the addition of a new Educational channel to serve local residents and families.

Sincerely,

Randy Hodgins
Vice President, Office of External Affairs
University of Washington

2. Letter from Bellingham School District related to interest in K-12 E channel

City received letter from Bellingham school district, shown on following two pages.



Superintendent
Greg Baker

Board of Directors
Kelly M. Bashaw
Kenneth B. Gass
Steven H. Smith
Scott Stockburger
E. Ann Whitmyer

City of Bellingham
Director of Information Technology
625 Halleck Street
Bellingham, WA 98225

Subject: COMCAST Franchise Agreement Renewal

As the City of Bellingham and COMCAST negotiate the terms of renewal of the franchise agreement covering delivery of cable services, Bellingham School District requests that certain educational related needs be considered. The district believes that services which deliver educational content to students, ensure sustained educational support activities and provide communications between schools, parents and the community at large should be made available for use as a free of charge public service. These services are prioritized as follows:

Priority 1: Cable Television Service. High quality digital television signals should be provided to each and every current and future school in the district as well as to the central office. There is a diverse selection of current news, public interest, governmental and educational content available via cable television channels. The district requests that all available channels be delivered free of charge as part of the franchise agreement excluding the premium services such as HBO, Showtime, Cinemax, Encore, etc. COMCAST should provision and maintain this service to the telecommunications point of demarcation within each building. The district is responsible for distribution and maintenance of the television signal from the point of demarcation within the building.

Priority 2: E-Channel Service. Each of the district's high schools already has equipment and software for video production and broadcast within the school building. This capability is rapidly expanding to the middle and elementary schools. The district requests that a public channel be reserved free of charge for delivery of school originated content to the community. The channel could be shared by other educational institutions and public school districts within the local COMCAST service area. Content could include announcements and information concerning school events, live coverage of sports events, social activities and academic competitions, entertainment produced by students, culminating project presentations by seniors, lectures and activities which supplement and enrich learning, communications from central administration which affects the school community as a whole, school board meetings, and emergency notifications when communications of information to a wide audience is time critical. It is estimated that content could be delivered between three to five hours per day when school is in session, two to three hours in the evening after school and one to two hours in the morning before school. Conceptually, broadcasts would originate from the school buildings and be transmitted over the

Bellingham School District #501
1306 Dupont Street, Bellingham, WA 98225-3118 • Phone: 360-676-6400 • FAX: 360-676-2793 • www.bellinghamschools.org

district's fiber optic network to the central office where it would be delivered to the cable system for distribution to the community.

Priority 3: I-Net Service. The district, in collaboration with the city, has installed its own fiber optic wide area network connecting schools and facilities to the central offices. Connectivity to the internet is provided through the K-20 Washington State Educational Network. The K-20 network provides bandwidth up to 100 MBps and is extremely reliable. However, it can become congested at certain times when events of national, regional or statewide importance are accessed simultaneously by virtually all subscribers. Internet connectivity has become an essential resource for teaching and learning. There is no curriculum offered today at any grade level that does not rely in some fashion on a stable and reliable connection to the Internet. Statewide on-line student assessments, distance learning opportunities and statistical and demographic data collection are but a few examples of the types of educational support operations being conducted via the Internet. In view of this increasing dependency on Internet connectivity, the district requests that in addition to the cable television services cited above, each building and facility be provided a COMCAST high speed broadband connection to the internet. This would be used as an alternate means of connection in the event that there is a failure in the district's own wide area network or the K-20 network is inoperable or unable to provide required throughput levels to support effective use of Internet resources.

Sincerely,



Ronald Cowan

Assistant Superintendent for Business and Operations

F. EXHIBIT F - FCC's Customer Service Standards

Except as otherwise provided in the Franchise Agreement, Grantee shall maintain one or more customer service and bill payment offices at convenient locations within the Service Area to provide the necessary facilities, equipment and personnel to comply with the following consumer protection standards under Normal Operating Conditions:

(a) Cable System office hours and telephone availability:

1. Grantee will maintain a local, toll-free or collect call telephone access line which will be available to its Subscribers 24 hours a day, seven (7) days a week.
 - i. Trained Grantee representatives will be available to respond to customer telephone inquiries during Normal Business Hours.
 - ii. After Normal Business Hours, the access line may be answered by a service or an automated response system, including an answering machine. Inquiries received after Normal Business Hours must be responded to by a trained Grantee representative on the next business day.
2. Under Normal Operating Conditions, telephone answer time by a customer representative, including wait time, shall not exceed thirty (30) seconds when the connection is made. If the call needs to be transferred, transfer time shall not exceed thirty (30) seconds. These standards shall be met no less than ninety (90%) percent of the time under Normal Operating Conditions, measured on a quarterly basis.
3. The Grantee will not be required to acquire equipment or perform surveys to measure compliance with the telephone answering standards above unless an historical record of complaints indicates a clear failure to comply.
4. Under Normal Operating Conditions, the customer will receive a busy signal less than three percent (3%) of the time.
5. Customer service center and bill payment locations will be open at least during Normal Business Hours.

(b) Installations, outages and service calls. Under Normal Operating Conditions, each of the following four standards will be met no less than ninety-five percent (95%) of the time measured on a quarterly basis:

1. Standard Installations will be performed within seven (7) business days after an order has been placed. "Standard" Installations are those that are located up to 125 feet from the existing distribution system.
2. Excluding conditions beyond the control of Grantee, Grantee will begin working on "service interruptions" promptly and in no event later than 24 hours after the interruption becomes known. The Grantee must begin actions to correct other service problems the next business day after notification of the service problem.

3. The "appointment window" alternatives for Installations, service calls, and other Installation activities will be either a specific time or, at maximum, a four-hour time block during Normal Business Hours. (The Grantee may schedule service calls and other Installation activities outside of Normal Business Hours for the express convenience of the customer.)
4. Grantee may not cancel an appointment with a customer after the close of business on the business day prior to the scheduled appointment.
5. If Grantee's representative is running late for an appointment with a customer and will not be able to keep the appointment as scheduled, the customer will be contacted prior to the time of the scheduled appointment. The appointment will be rescheduled, as necessary, at a time which is convenient for the customer.

(c) Communications between Grantee and Subscribers:

1. Notifications to Subscribers
 - i. The Grantee shall provide written information on each of the following areas at the time of Installation of service, at least annually to all Subscribers, and at any time upon request:
 - (A) Products and services offered;
 - (B) Prices and options for programming services and conditions of subscription to programming and other services;
 - (C) Installation and service maintenance policies;
 - (D) Instructions on how to use the Cable Service;
 - (E) Channel positions of the programming carried on the System; and
 - (F) Billing and complaint procedures, including the address and telephone number of the Grantee's office within the Service Area.
 - ii. Customers will be notified of any changes in rates, programming services or Channel positions as soon as possible through announcements on the Cable System and in writing. Notice must be given to Subscribers a minimum of thirty (30) days in advance of such changes if the change is within the control of the Grantee. In addition, the Grantee shall notify Subscribers thirty (30) days in advance of any significant changes in the other information required by Section 1.18(c)(1)(i).
2. Billing
 - i. Bills will be clear, concise and understandable. Bills must be fully itemized, with itemizations including, but not limited to, basic and premium service charges and equipment charges. Bills will also clearly delineate all activity during the billing period, including optional charges, rebates and credits.
 - ii. In case of a billing dispute, the Grantee must respond to a written complaint from a Subscriber within thirty (30) days.
3. Refunds

- i. Refund checks will be issued promptly, but no later than either:
 - (A) The customer's next billing cycle following resolution of the request or thirty (30) days, whichever is earlier, or
 - (B) The return of the equipment supplied by the Grantee if service is terminated.
- 4. Credits
 - i. Credits for service will be issued no later than the customer's next billing cycle following the determination that a credit is warranted.

G. EXHIBIT G - Inspection Report – Executive Summary

Executive Summary version of Physical Plant Inspection of Comcast Communications in the City of Bellingham, Washington. Prepared by Kramer.Firm, Inc. , and shown on the following pages.

Executive Report

Physical Plant Inspection of Comcast Communications in the City of Bellingham, Washington

May 2010

Inspected by
Kramer.Firm, Inc.

Submitted by:


Jonathan L. Kramer
President



Kramer.Firm Inc.

Telecommunications Technology
Counsel for Government
Agencies and Private Institutions
Since 1984

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2001 S. Barrington Avenue
Los Angeles, California
90025-3379

EXECUTIVE REPORT

PHYSICAL PLANT SAFETY INSPECTION OF COMCAST CABLE COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION	DESCRIPTION
A	Introduction and Summary of Findings
B	Areas of the City Inspected
C	System Description and Summary of Observations
ATTACH. A1	About the Inspectors

Executive Report

Physical Plant Safety Inspection of Comcast Cable Communications in the City of Bellingham, Washington

A

Introduction and Summary of Findings

Introduction

At the direction of the City of Bellingham, Kramer.Firm, Inc. conducted an outside plant safety compliance inspection of Comcast Cable. The inspection was conducted from May 24, 2010 through May 26, 2010.

The purpose of this inspection was to gauge Comcast's level of compliance with the National Electrical Safety Code, governing outside plant construction (i.e., pole-to-pole, and underground systems), and the National Electrical Code, governing construction and installation safety issues at homes and businesses attached to Comcast's system.

Jonathan L. Kramer, JD, FSCTE, STS, BDS, BPS developed the procedures for and supervised the testing process. Steve Allen, BCE, of Kramer.Firm conducted the entire inspection of the cable system. The qualifications of Messrs Kramer and Allen are shown at Attachment A1 of this Executive Summary.

Summary of Findings

Based on our inspection of hundreds of thousands of miles of cable plant in over 500 communities around the United States over the past twenty-six years we find that the Comcast system in City of Bellingham, Washington to be ABOVE average.

We found relatively few outside distribution plant infractions, indicating a system that is well built and for the most part, properly maintained. Power supplies and distribution plant were properly bonded to the electrical network as required. Although some infractions were observed, cable sag control and grounding installation and maintenance in the Comcast system were generally superior to other comparable systems we have inspected.

While the distribution plant was generally well maintained, we found numerous subscriber installation infractions. Specifically, Comcast's use of power masts as a point of connection for their coaxial cables is of serious concern. The number of installations affected by these problems is significant and may range in the thousands. These infractions are indications of systemic problems stemming from current or past installation practices.

The list of infractions noted as Attachment A.I of our inspection report tendered to the City should not be construed as complete or representing an audit of 100 percent of the system. Rather, it is a sample, and our judgments are based on nearly twenty six years of plant inspections in hundreds of communities around the country, including other Comcast systems.

We recommend that the City of Bellingham direct Comcast Communications to make the entire outside cable plant system, including without limitation all physical plant attachments; enclosures; drops; drop grounding; and structure installations, safe and code compliant with all applicable safety codes including the National Electrical Safety Code and the National Electric Code.

Comcast should be directed to develop a corrective action plan to address the plant and installation issues addressed in this report. We estimate that this corrective action plan should take no longer than 30 days to develop and deliver to the City for its comments or approval. We do not believe that the corrective actions required to bring Comcast's system into compliance in both outside plant and installation practices can be accomplished in the normal course of work, nor over a reasonable time without the assistance of additional outside contract help. We estimate that with a proper workforce, and an accurate audit of the plant, the violations noted in this sampling of the plant as well as the remainder of the system can be corrected in 12-18 months.

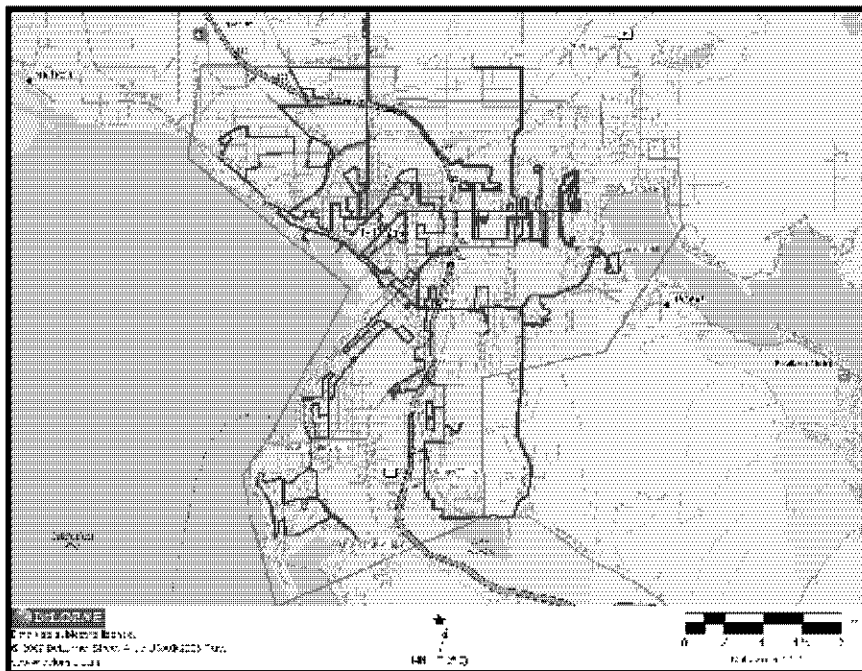
The City of Bellingham should consider the option of conducting periodic interim inspections of the work in progress to ensure compliance with legal requirements and to provide timely feedback to Comcast of discrepancies found.

As a preventive measure and to insure a continued high level of compliance, Comcast should conduct additional technical training for its field force on the requirements of the National Electrical Safety Code and the National Electric Code. Without adequate training and management oversight to insure code compliance, any effort to correct the existing deficiencies will be of limited value, as new infractions will be taking place at the same time that old infractions are being corrected.

B

Areas of the City Inspected

To observe the Comcast Plant, approximately 146 road miles were driven in the City. The specific areas that were inspected are shown below.¹



City of Bellingham, Washington. Drive route indicated by blue lines.

¹ The route was generated by using the automated tracking function of a Garmin V Global Positioning System (GPS) satellite receiver (serial number 3086406) connected to an external amplified roof-mounted antenna. The recorded position data was then download and displayed on DeLorme Street Atlas 2008 Pro software, which created the basic map output. Note that due to the accuracy of the position data provided by civilian GPS receivers such as the Garmin listed above, the track plotted is approximate only, and the actual track may vary by upwards of 10 meters, although the error is typically about 5 meters or less.

Executive Report: Physical Plant Safety Inspection
of Comcast Communications
in the City of Bellingham, Washington



System Descriptions and Summary of Observations

System Description:

The cable system in the City of Bellingham, Washington, operated by Comcast Communications has been rebuilt to be a modern Fiber to the Feeder (FTTF) architecture with amplifier cascade reduction implemented through the extensive use of fiber optic transportation and optical transition nodes.²

This means that instead of using long coaxial cable runs (called “cascades”) to reach the ends of the system, with the signal losses and distortions associated with repeated signal amplifications followed by coaxial cable signal losses, Comcast uses fiber optic cables to eliminate the vast majority of the signal losses and distortions associated with coaxial long distance signal distribution.

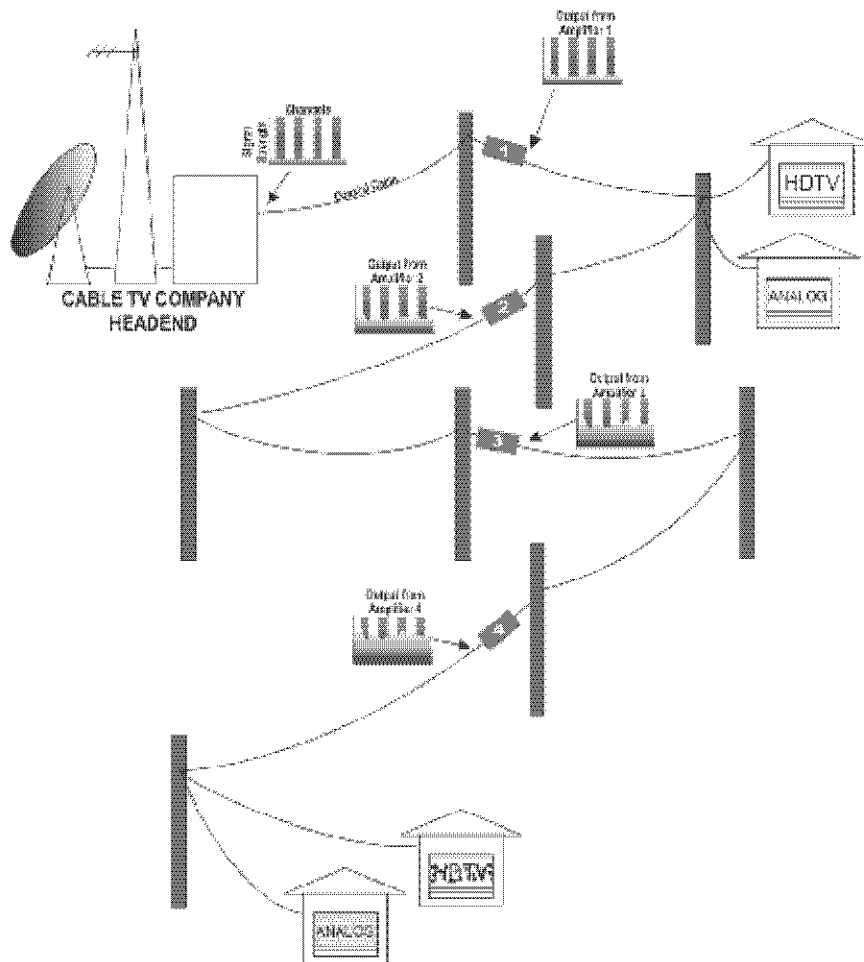
To better illustrate the differences (and benefits) from Comcast’s conversion from its legacy coaxial distribution network to its current fiber-to-the-feeder network please look at the following two illustrations.

The first illustration shows, in very simplified and exaggerated terms, Comcast’s former method of distributing its signals using coaxial cables that require repeated signal amplification to overcome the signal losses introduced by the coaxial cables.

Each time the signal is amplified, naturally occurring signal distortions are introduced. Subsequent amplifiers not only amplify in the incoming signal, but they also amplify the distortions from all of the prior amplifiers, and add a bit more distortion at the same time. It was common for cable systems to amplify the signal between 30 and 50 times to reach the subscribers at the far end of the cable system, thus subscribers that were located near the cable system’s headend might have a very high quality picture, but subscribers at the far end of the system would suffer from very snowy pictures, and that might also have substantial lines in the pictures.

² A fiber optic node is the device that converts the incoming light waves, carried from Comcast’s headend via fiber optic cables, to radio frequency energy that can be transmitted to subscribers using coaxial cables. Fiber optic cables are not used to directly serve subscribers since virtually no subscribers have television sets that can convert light directly into video, nor does Comcast offer fiber-input set-top cable converters to its subscribers.

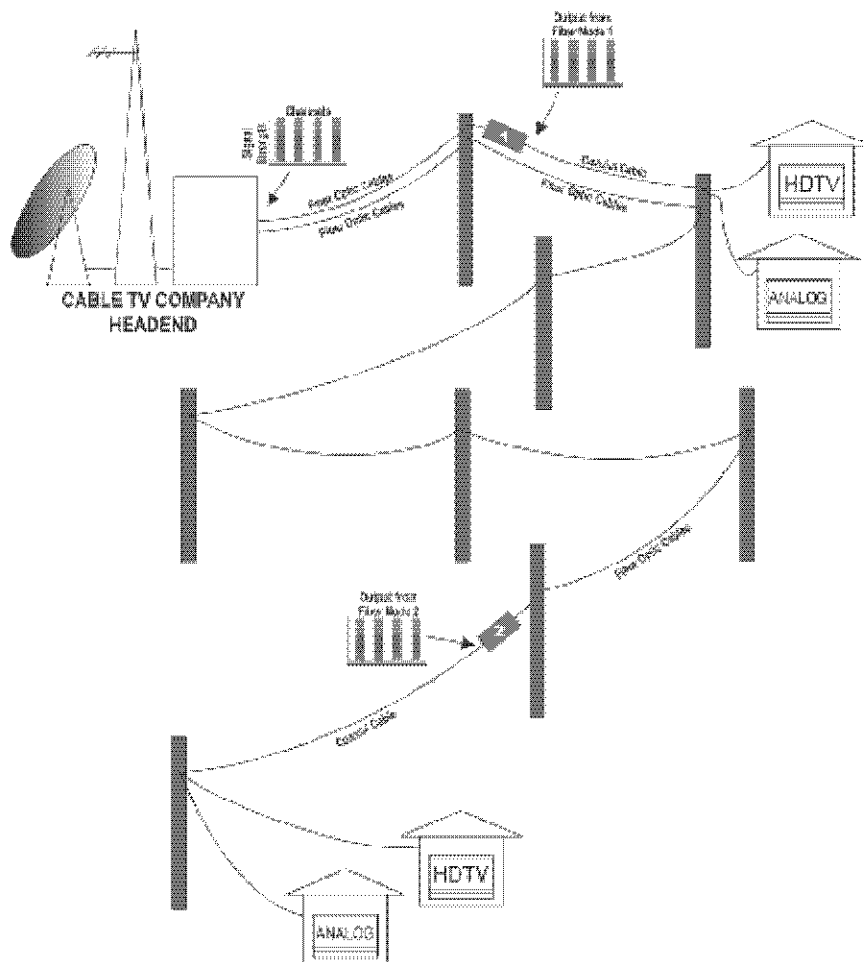
Executive Report: Physical Plant Safety Inspection
of Comcast Communications
in the City of Bellingham, Washington



The illustration on the next page illustrates a modern fiber-to-the-feeder cable system that is conceptually consistent with the current Comcast cable system in the City of Bellingham. The very low signal loss fiber optic cables that do not require intermediate amplification, so no distortions related to amplifiers will happen. Near the subscribers' homes, the fiber optic cable transported signals are converted back to signals that can be sent on short lengths of coaxial cable to serve the subscribers. Use of fiber optic cables for signal distribution overcomes the entire signal distorting disadvantages of the legacy

Executive Report: Physical Plant Safety Inspection
of Comcast Communications
in the City of Bellingham, Washington

method of coaxial cable signal distribution. Essentially, subscribers served by Node 2 have the same very high quality pictures received by subscribers served by Node 1.



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of Comcast Communications
in the City of Bellingham, Washington

The Comcast franchise area is served by a very dense network of fiber optic cables terminating in over 80 optical nodes. Each fiber optic node area is electrically (signal) isolated from all other nodes, so the loss of one fiber optic node impacts a relatively small portion of the cabled community.

Comcast has rebuilt its entire cable system and broken that system into 80 smaller service areas, referred to as fiber optic "nodes."

The completed rebuild was well done from a construction standpoint. Old cables requiring replacement were de-lashed or dropped to a temporary lower position as new cables were installed on top the existing network in order to keep all customers active during the rebuild. Large count fiber optic cables were routed throughout the franchise area, allowing for future network expansions and reconfigurations.

Comcast used good care during the rebuild of the system and very few construction related NESC violations were found.

While the distribution plant was constructed using great care to comply with the provisions of the NESC codes, the legacy residential drop systems providing cable service to dwellings from the poles situated in the right of way substantially fails to comply with cable related provisions of the National Electric Code (NEC) at many locations.

Plant Related Concerns

I. Riser cables not attached or properly supported on poles

The National Electrical Safety Code requires that riser cables be properly supported and attached to utility poles. In multiple locations (estimated to exceed 100) around the Comcast service area in the City, we observed riser cables that were either loosely and improperly attached to other utility conduits in violation of the NESC or not attached at all.

Executive Report: Physical Plant Safety Inspection
of Comcast Communications
in the City of Bellingham, Washington

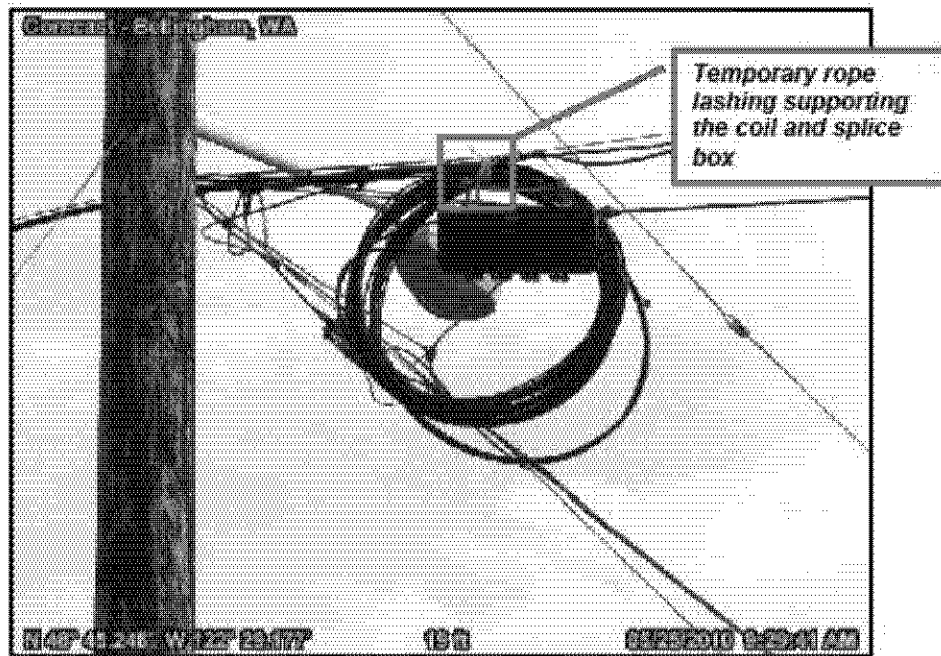


2325 Virgine Street

Executive Report: Physical Plant Safety Inspection
of Comcast Communications
in the City of Bellingham, Washington

2. Fiber optic cables and splice housings hanging from strand

Throughout the City of Bellingham franchise area we observed fiber optic cables and splice housings coiled up and tied temporarily to the overhead strand (estimated to exceed 100).



Corner of D Street and Holly Street. Fiber coil and splice box hanging from strand.

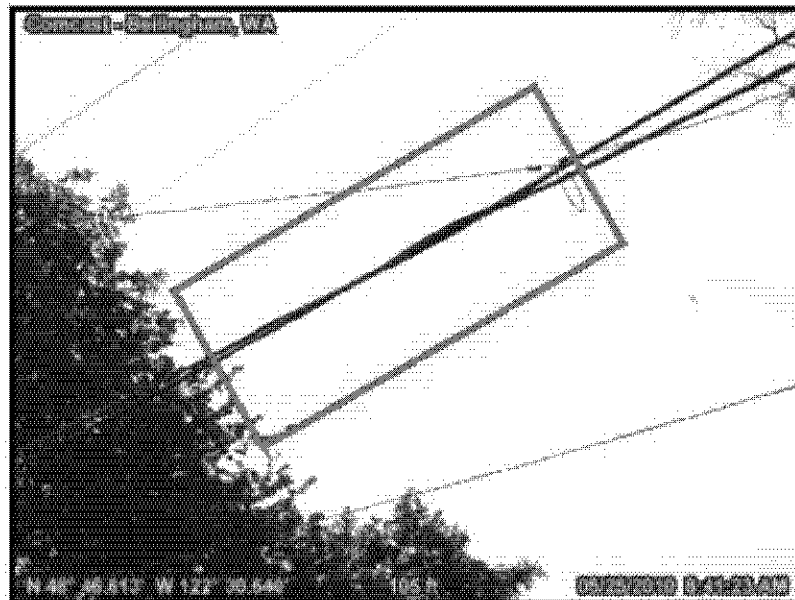
Heavy cable coils and splice housings suspended on overhead lines pose a risk to the general public and the integrity of the cable system itself. If the lashings used to attach the temporary equipment to stand should fail, the falling equipment could cause damage to objects and individuals below. Conversely, if the strand is not strong enough to support the equipment, the weight of the hanging equipment may cause the strand to sag or break. We observed this situation in many areas around Bellingham.

Executive Report: Physical Plant Safety Inspection
of Comcast Communications
in the City of Bellingham, Washington

3. Sagging Cables

Several instances of cable sag were observed during this inspection. Cable sag is the condition where all or some portion of a suspended CATV line dips below the telephone cables on above ground poles.

The National Electrical Safety Code requires that CATV cables be placed at least 1 foot above Telephone cables, and that the sag remains a consistent distance (concatenation) from each other between poles. In other words, cables are permitted to sag, so long as all cables in a given segment maintain the proper separation.



3217 Cottonwood: Sagging cable lines rubbing against and intertwined with telephone cable.

Executive Report: Physical Plant Safety Inspection
of Comcast Communications
in the City of Bellingham, Washington

4. Missing down guys and anchors

While not a widespread issue, our inspection disclosed several missing or damaged down guys (estimated to be less than 100).

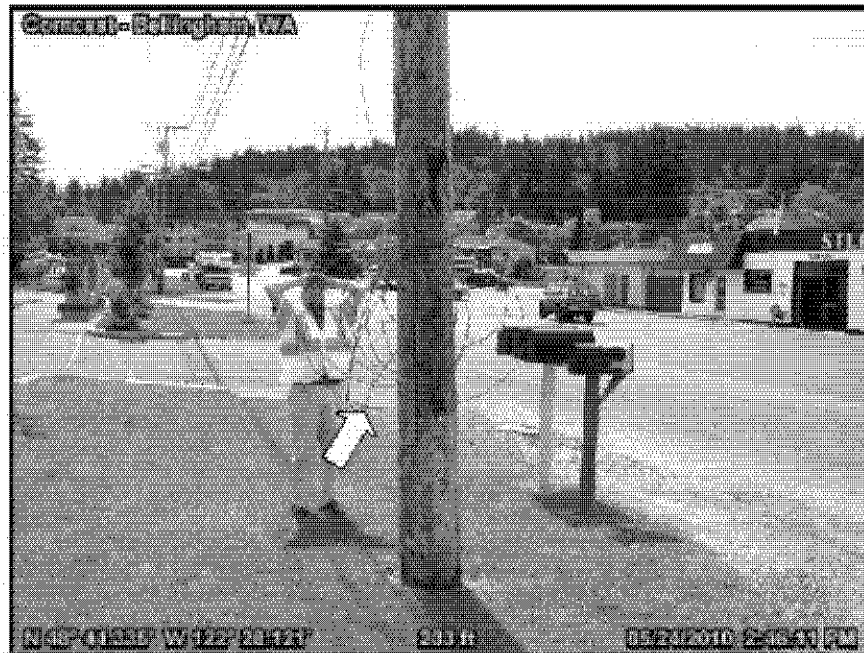


Figure 1: Corner of East Maple and Pasco Streets. Down guy loosely and unsafely wrapped around the base of the pole. Hazard to the public, and to pole line safety. Pole line load not shunted to ground.

Down guys, head guys and anchors provide a means of transferring the significant loading stresses placed on the poles by the cables and hardware to the earth. Anchors in the ground provide an offsetting tension for the weight and stress.

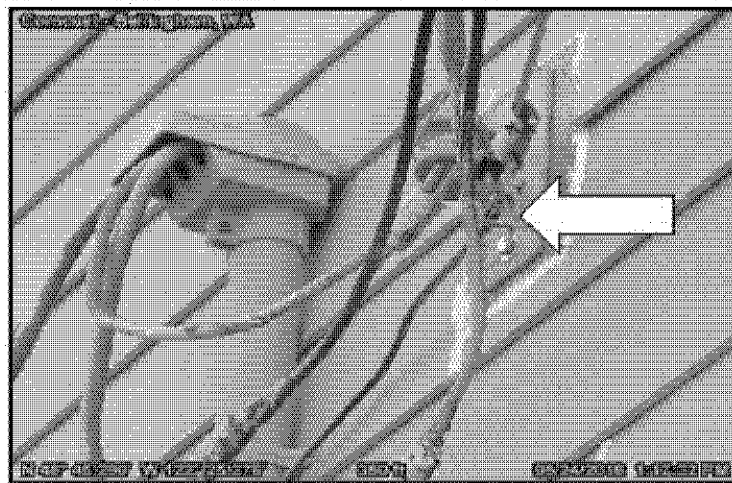
Missing down guys and anchors can result in poles leaning in the direction of the tension up to and including collapse. Proper maintenance of required down guys is an essential part of a well maintained system that properly shunts the pole stresses to ground anchors. Disconnected down guys wrapped around the base of poles presents a clear and obvious hazard to pedestrians and autos.

Executive Report: Physical Plant Safety Inspection
of Comcast Communications
in the City of Bellingham, Washington

Subscriber Drop Concerns

I. Improper clearances from telephone and power facilities

Proper installation and maintenance of the subscriber drop is a vital part of system reliability, and public and property safety. We observed a general lack of attention to the maintenance of proper clearance or separation from other utility wires throughout the cable system. Cable drops were run over or wrapped around telephone drops at locations. Wiring at the tap interferes with telephone equipment mounted below it. Cable drops were attached to the same hook as telephone at the house, or too close to power conductors. These are violations of the NEC section 820 requirements for house attachments as it pertains to physical clearances from other utility facilities.



Executive Report: Physical Plant Safety Inspection
of Comcast Communications
in the City of Bellingham, Washington

2. Cable drops attached to power masts above the roof

Comcast installers frequently make use of the electrical utility power riser above the roof for making cable drop attachments. The National Electrical Code prohibits the attachment of any cable drops to an above-the-roof mast containing electrical conductors. This is the most significant and wide-spread violation observed during the inspection throughout all portions of the Bellingham franchise area.



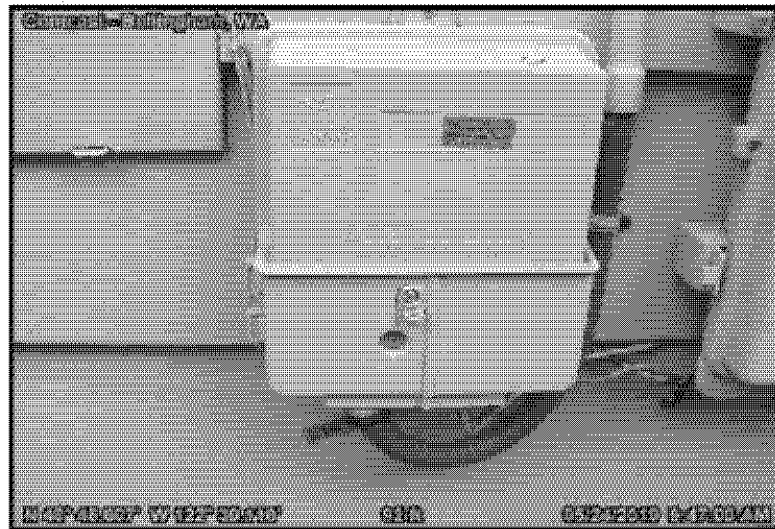
3235 Firwood Street, Cable drop attached to the power mast above the roof. Cables run over the roof of the building.

Comcast's practice often violates the required separation from the power drop and places installation personnel in a dangerous position as they try to work in close proximity to the power conductors.

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of Comcast Communications
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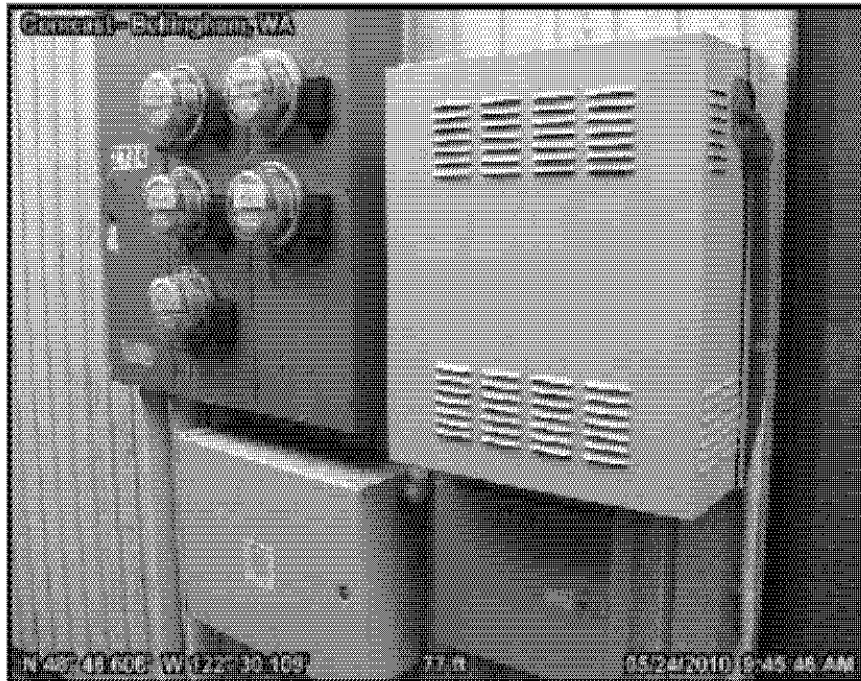
3. Obsolete Arris Cornerstone Switched Digital Telephony Units Apparently Abandoned in Place

Comcast and its predecessor, AT&T Broadband have apparently abandoned in place hundreds of obsolete (NIU) Network Interface Units on the sides of homes and apartment buildings following their switch to Voice-over-IP technology (VOIP). To the extent that the units are hardwired to some buildings and still attached to the power utility, some of these units may be drawing power from the affected customer's utility service. These apparently abandoned units are also occupying space on the customer's property when their presence is no longer justified and should be removed.



Arris Cornerstone Digital Telephone NIU apparently abandoned in place.

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2724 West Maplewood, Apartment building. Large Gray Box, Arris Apartment MDU Cornerstone multi-customer NID. Apparently abandoned in place.

4. Comcast Network Grounding (Bonding)

The Comcast system in Bellingham is unusual and exemplary in a key respect: it is one of the finest examples we have observed regarding proper system and subscriber network grounding. While not perfect, it is far above average.

The vital purpose of grounding is based on life and fire safety issues. If Comcast's coaxial cable entering a building is not adjusted to be at the same electrical characteristic as the building electrical ground, then there is an opportunity for electrical current to flow between the cable system and the electrical system. This flow, typically through the subscriber converter and TV set, creates an electrical shock and fire potential.

The Bellingham cable system operated by Comcast is well above average in compliance with NEC grounding specifications at the residences. While not 100 percent compliant, we give the Bellingham system a top mark for network grounding and subscriber protection.

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We did find the occasional missing or damaged ground, and those need to be corrected, but for the most part, the grounding of the system is in very good condition.

5. Comcast Network Workmanship

One of the most difficult—and important—aspects of maintaining a broadband cable system is to keep all wiring neat and orderly in a workmanlike manner. Maintaining the system in this way is not only required by code but also a benefit to overall system reliability.

As plant ages, attachments start to come apart. Lashing wire breaks, wires come loose, taps become congested and without constant effort and maintenance, the wiring begins to deteriorate or become unattached and subsequently, unreliable, or even dangerous.

Comcast is required by both the National Electrical Safety Code, as well as the National Electrical Code to construct and maintain their cable plant and installations in a neat, compliant, and workmanlike manner.

Items such as down drops, wiring on roofs, loose attachments on homes and apartment buildings, all require constant inspection and maintenance.

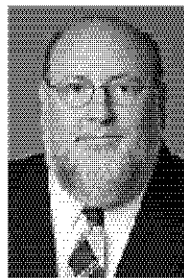
Comcast of Bellingham has made rather extensive use of drop control boxes to secure and conceal wiring connections. This use of the drop control box makes the installations much neater. In general, Comcast does a very good job of maintaining the integrity and appearance of its wiring on buildings.

<End of Executive Summary>

<Attachment Follows>

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Attachment A1: The Inspectors



STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE
JONATHAN L. KRAMER, JD, FSCTE, BTS, BDS, BPS, CBT

- Licensed by the Federal Communications Commission (General Radiotelephone Operator License PG-11-35289, with Ship Radar Endorsement) (Previously licensed as a Second Class Radio Telephone Operator, September 1975; First Class Radio Telephone Operator, November 1977; General Radiotelephone Operator License, June 1987)
- Licensed by the Federal Communications Commission as an amateur radio operator since November 1970; currently licensed as an Advanced Class operator (KD6MR)
- Former National Board of Directors member, National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA), an affiliate of the National League of Cities (Terms: 1997-2000, 1992-1994)
- Former Co-chair of National Technical Standards Committee appointed by NATOA, National League of Cities, and US Conference of Mayors to develop the national technical standards for cable television systems adopted by the FCC in February 1992
- NATOA's 1997 Member of the Year (honored for information delivery to NATOA members)
- NATOA's 1991 Member of the Year (honored for achievements in developing and negotiating national cable television technical standards)



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- Former Co-chair of National Technical Standards committee appointed by NATOA, National League of Cities, and US Conference of Mayors to develop the national technical standardized testing manual to determine compliance with the FCC rules
- Senior Member of Society of Cable Telecommunications Engineers (Senior Member since April 1993; Member since 1981)
- Fellow, Institute for the Advancement of Engineering (FIAE) (Nominated by Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers)
- Member, International Right of Way Association
- Witness before the FCC in Cable TV re-regulation hearings, March 1990, representing NATOA, et al
- Right-of-Way engineering and management expertise related to telecommunications networks and radio communications siting
- Testifying expert witness in federal and state court cases
- Technology speaker at every NATOA National Conference since 1988; Technology speaker at many regional and local NATOA meetings
- Communications technology speaker at Society of Cable Telecommunications Engineers conferences and cable industry conferences
- Published author of book and magazine articles on communications technology, Plant safety, construction, and administration
- Cable system engineering and technical management experience six years before forming firm; Chief Technician, Technical Manager, Regional Engineer.
- Former Field Engineering Representative for Motorola Communications and Electronics, Area F Program Management team — Areas of experience include microwave radio; baseband RF and audio; digital signaling; UHF and VHF two-way radio (including high stability Simulcast® radio operations); telephony; and command and control communications.

Kramer Firm has served over 500 local governments or local government groups since 1984.



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Federal Agencies, National Associations, States

Federal Communications Commission / U.S. Department of Justice
National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors
Society of Cable Telecommunications Engineers
United States Attorney, Los Angeles
United States Army, Ft. Irwin, CA
U.S. Marine Corps, Twentynine Palms, CA
U.S. Navy, Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA
United States Conference of Mayors
National Association of Counties
National League of Cities
State of Michigan Public Utilities Commission
State of Connecticut Department of Public Utility Control

Universities, Colleges, School Districts

University of Alabama
Pepperdine University
Orange Coast College
Rancho Santiago College
Centralia School District
Oxnard Union School District

Selected Litigation

Sprint v. City of La Cañada (Expert for City in two cases)
AT&T Wireless v. City of San Diego (Expert for City)
Nextel v. City of San Diego (Expert for City)
AT&T Wireless v. City of Carlsbad (Expert for City)
Level 3 Communications v. City of Santee (Expert for City)
Comcast v. City of Thousand Oaks (Expert for City)
GTE MobileNet v. City and County of Bellingham (Expert for City and County)
Playboy Enterprises v. US (Expert for US DOJ and FCC)
US Cellular v. Peoria County (Expert for Peoria County)
Jones Intercable v. Chula Vista (Expert for City of Chula Vista)
West Covina v. Comcast Cable (Expert for City of West Covina)
Sierra East Television v. Westar Cable (Expert for Sierra East Television)
Booth American v. US (Expert for US DOJ)
D. B. Cable v. Kalma Busk (Expert for Kalma Busk)



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Selected Lectures

International Right of Way Association
Virginia Association of Cities
NATOA National Conference (Every conference since 1988)
NATOA Southern Virginia and Nevada Chapter (Multiple Presentations)
NATOA Illinois Chapter (Multiple presentations)
NATOA Minnesota Chapter
NATOA Texas Chapter
Society of Cable Telecommunications Engineers National Engineering Conference
Society of Cable Telecommunications Engineers (Multiple Chapters)

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STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE
STEVEN C. ALLEN - BCE, BTCS, BPS, BDS

7/01 to Present Kramer.Firm, Inc. Senior Broadband Technologist

Broadband and cable system inspection specialist; RF technology. Reports directly to and under the supervision of Jonathan L. Kramer, Kramer.Firm's Principal.

5/00 to 7/01 Cisco Systems, Inc Consulting System Engineer (CSE) Cable and Wireless Business Unit.

Provided technical expertise and industry knowledge to the development and sale of broadband cable modems, Cable Modem Termination Systems (CMTS), video products, and wireless Internet products.

Prepared and delivered focused product training and presentations to internal work groups and Cisco customers. Assisted in the development of specifications and features of next generation Cisco products and worked with customer account teams on product evaluations or deployments.

Worked with local Account Managers and System Engineers to resolve specific operational problems at customer locations. Providing feedback to manufacturing or product development on requirements or improvements to products. Provided training to customer staff on Cisco products. Provided RF/HFC experience and industry knowledge to Cisco sales and marketing departments to better acquaint them with the broadband cable industry. (Industry point of view). Leveraged extensive vendor contacts to provide information and possible solutions to specific product development requirements.

11/98 to 5/2000 TVC Communications, Inc Western Regional Sales Engineer:



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Responsible for technical sales and training support to major Broadband providers including CATV, Telco, Manufacturing, Broadcast and Satellite networks in California and Nevada. Sales Engineer for 2nd largest broadband distributor in USA. Specializing in complex headend and outside Plant products. Primary product lines include Tektronix analog and digital test equipment, Motorola Optical and HFC Distribution equipment, fiber optic splicing and termination systems, including enclosures, fusion splicers, fiber management systems. Work closely with regional account managers to assist in product specifications, RFP's, training related needs and hands-on training for customer staff. Assist in identification of system needs, and design solutions based on offered products and services.

12/95 to 11/98 Roseville Telephone Company Broadband Systems Engineer:

Working in a combined Broadband/Telco environment, helped implement one of the first experiments in Fiber to the Curb (FTTC) architecture in Del Webb's Sun City development in Roseville, California. Responsible for design and implementation of new centralized network powering system, HFC design review, network monitoring system for system power, new product and technology evaluations, staff training, and Broadband overviews for management.

Directly involved in mapping and conducting signal surveys in the Sacramento area for wireless PCS coverage. I worked with several right-of-way contractors and Lucent, to secure cellular and co-locate sites for network build-out.

12/86- 12/95 Jones Intercable, Inc. System Engineering Manager:

Responsible for all aspects of inside and outside Plant for cable television system serving Roseville, California. Supervised staff of 15 installers, technicians and construction personnel. Designed and implemented new office building telecommunications services and placement. Designed and implemented new CATV headend encompassing towers, satellite receiving dishes, central grounding network, and data services. Coordinated cutover from old headend and services to all new facilities. Designed and installed first fiber optic CATV network in the Sacramento area employing a Cable Area Network design devised by Jones Intercable. Worked with other departments to insure that system goals and business plans were met. Administered OSHA/CALOSHA Hazmat/Hazcom program. Provided temporary engineering support and management supervision to related Jones Intercable business units in other areas of Northern California.

1/85 to 12/86 Viacom Cablevision Headquarters Corporate Staff Engineer:



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Responsible for technical support for home terminal products and converter repair facilities at Viacom systems in USA. Provided staff assistance at system level to resolve technical difficulties beyond scope of local personnel. Worked with product vendors to develop solutions to technical problems. Assisted corporate purchasing department in developing cost effective alternatives to vendor provided services or materials.

10/82 to 1/85 Viacom Cablevision- North Bay Region Regional Systems Engineer:

Responsible for all headends, microwave systems, and FCC liaison for systems in North Bay region including San Rafael, Petaluma, Napa, Pinole, Crockett, and Rodeo. Supervised and supported a crew of 4 headend technicians in maintaining headend equipment including over-the-air processors, FM, AML microwave, FM terrestrial microwave, Satellite TVRO and Fiber optic links. Also responsible for overseeing Viacom Plant training program and coordinating activities of regional Plant trainer. Additional responsibilities included Regional Engineer for the Bay Area Interconnect, a microwave trunk system delivering advertiser supported satellite programming to 500 thousand cable subscribers in the greater Bellingham Bay area.

6/79 to 10/82 Viacom Cablevision Chief Technician:

Responsible for operation of system Plant in Oroville, Paradise, Colusa, Gridley and Biggs, California. Supervise a crew of 4 system technicians. Maintain 6 headends with AML microwave transmitters and receivers, satellite TVRO, FM Microwave, processors, antennas and associated equipment.

1/79-6/79 Nor-Cal Cablevision System Technician:

Responsible for system maintenance on distribution and house drop level. Perform routine service calls in response to customer requests.

2/78 to 12/78 Cal-Com Systems Sales Engineer:

Design and market mobile communications systems for RCA Mobile Communications Division in the Bellingham Bay Area.

1/76 to 1/78 Concord TV Cable (A unit of Western Communications) Construction Technician:

Duties involved construction and proof of new overhead and underground cable Plant. Construction leader during complete rebuild of Concord system in 1977. Promoted to Field Technical Supervisor for rebuild. Also involved in production work for local origination department.



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6/75 to 1/76 United States Air Force Reserve Basic Training

6/73 to 6/75 State TV Cable (A unit of Western Communications) Construction Linemen:

Duties involved construction of new overhead and underground Plant. Construction
lineman for complete electronics change out for CATV franchises in Willows, Corning
and Orland, California.

6/70 to 6/73 Concord TV Cable (A unit of Western Communications) Installer:

Education:

9/73 - 5/75 California State University Chico, Chico, California BA degree,
Telecommunications

9/71 - 5/72 San Diego State University, San Diego, California Undergraduate work,
Broadcasting

9/69 - 6/71 Diablo Valley College, Pleasant Hill, California Associate of Arts Degree,
General Education emphasis on Broadcasting

Professional Associations:

Society of Cable Telecommunications Engineers (SCTE) 1979 to Present
1991 National Member of the Year
Elevated to Senior Member in 1991

SCTE Offices held:

SCTE Region I National Director (CA, NV, HI)
SCTE Western Vice Chairman
SCTE Executive Committee member
Vice President, Sierra Chapter, SCTE serving Sacramento
Member, SCTE National Planning Committee
Member, SCTE BCT/E Industry Certification Committee.
Chairman, SCTE Northern California Vendors Day

National Cable Television Association

Member, Cable Pioneers, Class of 1993

Credentials:



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FCC General Class Radiotelephone License; prior-licensed as a Second Class General Radiotelephone License (continuously licensed since 1980)
SCTE Broadband Certified Engineer (BCE); continually certified since 1988
SCTE Certified Broadband Telecom Center Specialist, BTCS. Since 2002
FCC Amateur Radio Licensee (Call sign: KC6VCC; continuously licensed since 1991)

Military Service: 1975-1981

USAF Reserve Law Enforcement Specialist. Chico
Honor Graduate USAF Police Academy
USN Reserve Avionics Technician. Alameda, California
Honorably discharged May 1981



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