

## Summary of Cable Related Needs and Interests Report

### Community Cable Related Needs

A report on Cable-Related needs and interests was prepared as part of this informal negotiations process. The document is necessarily long and detailed, and represented over 2 years of data gathering and assessment on the part of the Telecommunications Task Force, staff and numerous consultants. The report in its entirety can be viewed at <http://www.cityofdavis.org/pcs/telecomm>. The purpose of the report is to describe community needs and to link the identified issues and problems to cable-related needs and interests. Thus, each chapter enumerates issues, problems and needs found in each area of study. The primary areas of study were:

- Section B: surveys of residents and businesses
- Section C: community-based focus groups
- Section D: review of strategic plans and other community documents
- Section E: description and evaluation of the PEG system
- Section F: description and evaluation of Institutional Networks (the way in which government, schools and community institutions link together)
- Section G: evaluation of system maintenance and past-performance.

Within each section, issues and problems are described. At the end of each section, cable-related needs indicated by each of the issues and problems are discussed. Since considerable space is given in the report to link each issue, problem and need indicated by the problems, these will only be summarized for this staff report.

The general and specific issues summarized in the report are:

- Access to service, adaptability of service, geographic availability of services,
- Lack of broadband availability in Davis hindering education, residents, governments and business
- Budget cuts threatening local public, educational and government channels
- Cable services are bundled poorly, and the local cable system lacks high definition, on-demand, cable modem and channel blocking services; the system often has low quality of picture and sound
- Distance learning is limited on the current cable system
- Economic development is inhibited by lack of broadband in the downtown and commercial districts in Davis
- Government efficiency is limited by a lack of connected city facilities, lack of a high-speed institutional network, and lack of interconnection between the county, the university, the schools and the city
- Public safety is limited from a lack of training opportunities available through an institutional network, the lack of connectivity necessary to connect police, fire and other public safety groups on the institutional network and by lack of a state-of-the-art emergency notification system
- The pressure to build additional housing could be relieved by more home-based telecommuting

- Local news is not adequately covered in Davis by regional stations and newsgroups; local cable channels can add to the insight, depth and breath of local news coverage, while also broadcasting local sports and community events via remote broadcast capabilities
- Local non-profits are have increasing difficulty communicating with constituents, clients and other organizations
- The cable company has had serious customer service and system performance issues in the past. Most notably, the system ground and maintenance is substandard, the customer service standards have been inconsistent, the institutional network promised for construction under the last franchise was not built, and franchise fee payments are unaudited
- The Public, Educational and Government (PEG) channels have out-of-date equipment, infrastructure problems, technical support problems, and shortages of adequate staff and space. This problem will only be complicated in the future as production standards increase and transfer to digital and other emerging technologies
- The PEG channels are at risk of losing viewership if the cable company moves the location of the channels and especially if the channels are moved to other than the lowest tier of service
- The cable penetration rate in Davis is low compared with other cities in the region, largely due to the poorly performing system, poor customer service and lack of upgrades sought by cable customers, including high-speed internet
- Numerous businesses have trouble accessing high-speed internet and obtaining adequate phone service. While the city cannot expressly require these services through the cable contract, it is important to make these community needs known to the company
- Cable rates have continued to climb in spite of poor system performance
- The system does not adequately meet the needs of visually, hearing or physically impaired residents, especially on the PEG channels

In response to these and other problems stated in the report, the task force has identified certain cable-related needs which should be addressed by the cable franchise. These needs are summarized in each section of the report, are far too many to list in this short staff summary, and include the need for:

- A rebuilt cable system including high-speed broadband services, high definition television and video on-demand.
- All cable services available to both commercial and residential customers throughout all of Davis
- Facility, equipment and programmatic upgrades for public, educational and government channels
- Additional cable channels dedicated for local use, as well as cable system capacity and functionality adequate to support public, educational, government and institutional network uses within the city
- Fiber optic capacity and links to all schools, to the University, to all city facilities and to key community institutions
- Improved technical support, customer service and consumer choices in products, services and channels.

- Flexible and adaptive technologies which encourage a state-of-the-art system for residents, PEG channels and the INET throughout the life of the franchise
- Interconnected bulletin board systems and user-friendly recording processes that will allow even more nonprofit groups to use the PEG system for community outreach
- Remote video origination sites that will allow recording and broadcast of meetings, classes and events throughout all of Davis
- Connections between various video and cable systems that will allow Davis residents to take advantage of distance learning opportunities with CSU Sacramento, UCD and other regional colleges and universities