



Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
Innovation. Collaboration. Practical Solutions.

Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission

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DATE: July 7, 2011

TO: Mayor Sam Adams
Commissioner Amanda Fritz
Commissioner Nick Fish
Commissioner Dan Saltzman
Commissioner Randy Leonard
Auditor Lavonne Griffin-Valade

FROM: Andre' Baugh, Chair
Planning and Sustainability Commission

RE: **Broadband Strategic Plan: Connecting to our Future**

Mayor, Commissioners and Auditor,

I am writing on behalf of the Planning and Sustainability Commission (PSC) to express our support for continuing the work of Portland's Broadband Strategic Plan: Connecting to our Future. The stated goal of the plan is to facilitate and encourage the provision of world class broadband infrastructure in Portland. The plan would create a roadmap for Portland's success in the emerging global digital economy and expand Portland's broadband capacity and adoption essential to achieving its livability, prosperity, sustainability and equity goals. The PSC endorses the plan's moving forward. We recognize that accessible and affordable broadband internet is essential infrastructure for job creation, equity, education, health care, the enhancement of safe and connected communities, civic engagement, government transparency and responsiveness, reduced carbon emissions, and emergency preparedness.

Equity needs to play an important role in the plan. Over 20 percent of Portland homes don't have internet access because they can't afford it and/or they don't understand its relevance to their lives. As you know, equity plays a center role in the draft Portland Plan. Equity requires the intentional examination of systemic policies and practices that, even if they have the appearance of fairness, may, in effect, serve to marginalize some and perpetuate disparities. Working toward equity requires an understanding of historical contexts and the active investment in social structures over time to ensure that all communities can experience their vision for success.

With documented evidence that many in our community do not have access to broadband internet, we should support moving forward with strategies that address this digital gap. Not only should broadband be affordable to all, but everyone should understand how to use the internet and how it can benefit their lives.

The US is #16 in the world in terms of broadband technology. Other communities in the Portland metropolitan area have fiber to the home (FTTP) infrastructure, which has left Portland at a competitive and technological disadvantage. The plan should address how Portland can leverage its



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assets through existing, programs and policies to catapult Portland forward so that we are not only peers locally but also on the international level.

The Bureau of Planning and Sustainability staff is working with the Office of Cable Communications and Franchise Management to incorporate key elements of the broadband strategy in the Portland Plan.

Sincerely,



Andre' Baugh
Chair

