



April 18, 2017

Re: Boulder Chamber Recommendations on Broadband Infrastructure Investment

Dear Mayor Jones and Members of Boulder City Council:

The Boulder Chamber was pleased to support 2014 Ballot Measure 2C, affirming the City of Boulder's right to provide telecommunication services, and looks forward to the implementation of this measure. As we move ahead in the implementation phase, we offer the following recommendations on the best way to proceed.

First, as you consider the various mechanisms for building-out Boulder's broadband network, the Boulder Chamber recommends that the City of Boulder remove the provision that its broadband infrastructure must be entirely City owned and financed. This step will free staff to explore what's possible to achieve through a private arrangement or the hybrid model of a public-private partnership. Further, eliminating the fully public ownership and financing model gives the City of Boulder the most negotiating leverage in support of meeting many of the goals articulated for its buildout.

Among the priority characteristics of our broadband system that we ask City Council to uphold in any private or public-private relationship, maintaining ubiquitous buildout is critically important from the business community's perspective. It is further important to promote equity among all businesses, residents and segments of our community. 'Open access' is an additionally valuable feature, as it will facilitate development of a model that fosters further innovation and competitive rates.

Regardless of the path the City of Boulder chooses, the Boulder Chamber asks the City of Boulder to make clear the associated financial costs and other implications before going forward. We depend on reliability and seek competitive rates, but it will be difficult to assess different infrastructure ownership models without the specific financial details clearly defined. To be clear, while the business community is very supportive of moving forward with broadband infrastructure for our community, and encourage creative financing measures, we want to be sure the costs associated with this investment are equitably allocated and it must be deemed economically viable.

In closing, the Boulder Chamber is a strong advocate for investment in broadband infrastructure that will give our community access to high speed internet service. It is paramount importance to sustaining our strong economy, as well as meeting other valuable community goals. We offer the above financing conditions and system characteristics as what the Boulder Chamber believes are important to uphold through your evaluation of the various investment options.

Sincerely,

John Tayer
President & CEO
Boulder Chamber

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