

# **Public Access Cable Proposal**

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# Definition of Public Access

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“Non-commercial television programming produced by organizations and/or individuals in the community without restriction or censorship that air on a designated public access channel.”

Envisioned as the “electronic soap box”

# PEG Channels

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Comcast and CenturyLink franchises:

- Government Access (CVTV) -3 channels (2 standard, 1 HD)
- Educational Access (TV ETC) -4 channels (3 standard, 1 HD)
- Public Access - 1 standard channel
- One additional HD channel

# History of Public Access

- 1981- Public access authorized through first cable franchise agreement
- 1984-1996- Cable operator provided studio, equipment and training
- 1984- Federal law prohibits local governments from requiring cable operators to provide operating support for public access

# History of Public Access

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- 1997 - Franchise renewal, cable operator ceased providing public access in June 1999
- 2001- City and County provide \$150,000 in start-up operational funds and \$250,000 in capital for public access. Organization to be self-supporting within 3 years
- 2010-County begins providing annual operational support of \$50,000 for FVTV

# History of Public Access

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- From 2004-2012, FVTV received \$1.2 million in PEG capital funds
- From 2010-2015, FVTV received \$250,000 in operational funds from the County

# Status of Public Access

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- Fort Vancouver Television (FVTV) ceased cable broadcast on 12/31/14
- Collection and storage of PEG equipment
- Community Access Network (CAN)
- Comcast request to return the channel

# Status of Public Access

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- July 2014- FVTV not re-designated as public access provider
- April 2015- RFP issued for new provider, two proposals received (VCAM & FVTV)
- July 2015 – Telecommunications Commission recommends VCAM proposal

# Status of Public Access

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- September- October 2015- Workshop with both Councils on VCAM proposal
- November 2015- VCAM Business Plan provided to City & County

# VCAM Proposal

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- Independent, non-profit organization
- Locally focused, non-commercial media anchored by community access television
- A community media & cultural center based out of the Kiggins Theater
- Partnership with WSUV

# VCAM Proposal

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- \$50,000 per year in operating funds from the City, County and WSUV
- WSUV's contribution contingent on the City & County contribution

# Current Situation

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- City has declined to provide operational funds
- Change in VCAM leadership
- Verbal offer to continue without City and WSUV operating funds
- Possible use of CenturyLink PEG funds

# Considerations for Public Access

- More communications options available then in 1981 (YouTube, Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, Vimeo, etc.)
- City and County have no legal or contractual obligation to provide public access

# Public Access Provider

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- Authorization to broadcast on Channel 11
- First right of refusal on FVTV PEG funded equipment
- Ability to apply for annual PEG grants
- Commission Recommendation - \$250,000 in PEG capital funds for start-up

# Commission Recommendations

- Strong advocates for public access
- Proposal unlikely to succeed without on-going, annual operating funds
- \$250,000 capital contribution needs to be carefully monitored
- Concerned about organizational name

# Next Steps

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## Public Access:

- Negotiate Professional Services Agreement
- City and County designate public access provider and approve PSA

# Next Steps

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## No Public Access:

- Assign remaining HD channel and return standard channel to Comcast
- Make surplus equipment available to other PEG providers
- \$250,000 will be available for PEG grants

# Questions and Discussion

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