

Comcast Cable Television Franchise

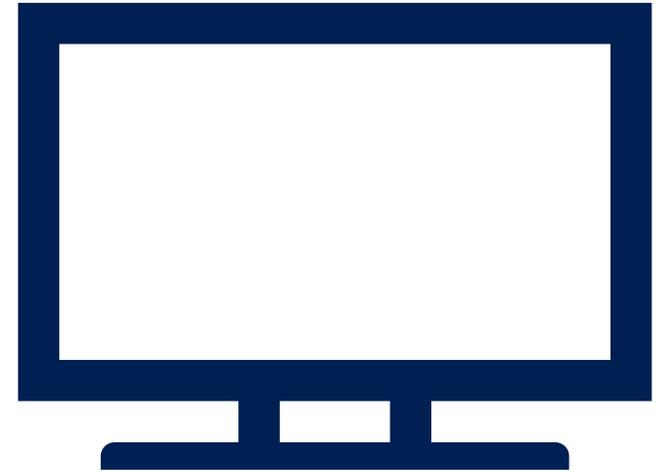
Governance & Utilities Committee

February 12, 2026



Purpose of Proposed Legislation

- Legislation amends the cable franchise agreement between the City of Seattle and Comcast to extend the franchise for 7 years, through January 20, 2033.
- As part of the City's negotiations with Comcast, Seattle IT conducted a community assessment and worked to retain or increase community benefits to the City and its residents.
- Raising Franchise Fee and PEG (Public, Education, and Government) Fee to help support programs funded by cable funds including Internet for All and Seattle Channel.



Cable Franchises

- Governed by Federal law, 47 U.S.C. section 542, the Cable Act of 1984, and Telecommunications Act of 1996.
- SMC 21.60, Seattle Cable Code, requires cable providers to meet technical, customer service, and privacy standards, including the Cable Customer Bill of Rights.
- Current franchisees include Comcast and Astound (formerly Wave).



Cable Franchise Renewals

- Franchise Agreements expire after 10 years as currently negotiated.
- Renewal process begins 3 years prior to franchise expiration.
- Formal and Informal Renewal Process options.
 - Processes Run Concurrently
- Majority of Franchises renew via *Informal Process*.
- Must remain mindful to comply with all requirements.



Cable Franchise Renewals - Timeline

Action	Comcast	Astound
Renewal Notice Received	2/21/2023	12/12/2024
Commence Renewal Proceedings	Resolution 32095, adopted 7/5/2023	Resolution 32171, adopted 6/3/2025
Renewal Period	2/2023-1/2026	12/2024-11/2027
Franchise Expires	1/20/2026* *Temporary extension until 4/30/2026, or until City adopts new Council Bill	11/11/2027



Community Assessment

- Resident Survey
- Community Listening Sessions
- Cable Customer Bill of Rights Audit
- Seattle Channel Capital Needs Assessment
- Technical Review

Seattle Cable Customers, did you know you have rights?



The Cable Customer Bill of Rights (CCBOR):
visit www.seattle.gov/cable

The CCBOR requires cable companies to provide:

- Courteous, knowledgeable customer service
- Help with billing issues
- Credits to your account for CCBOR violations
- Assistance to customers with disabilities and more...

The City's Digital Equity Program (Office of Cable Communications) can help:

- Call the 24-hour Cable Line at (206) 684-8498
- Submit an online comment or question at www.seattle.gov/cable

Seattle Residents: Low-income? On Seattle Utility Discount Program?

Call about a available discounts on Internet service:



Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) by FCC:
\$30/month *discount* on your internet service bill.
Call (877) 384-2575 or www.affordableconnectivity.gov

Internet Essentials by Comcast/Xfinity: \$9.95/month
Call (855) 846-8376 or www.internetessentials.com

Simply Internet by Astound Broadband: \$9.95/month
Call (206) 684-8498 for application materials.

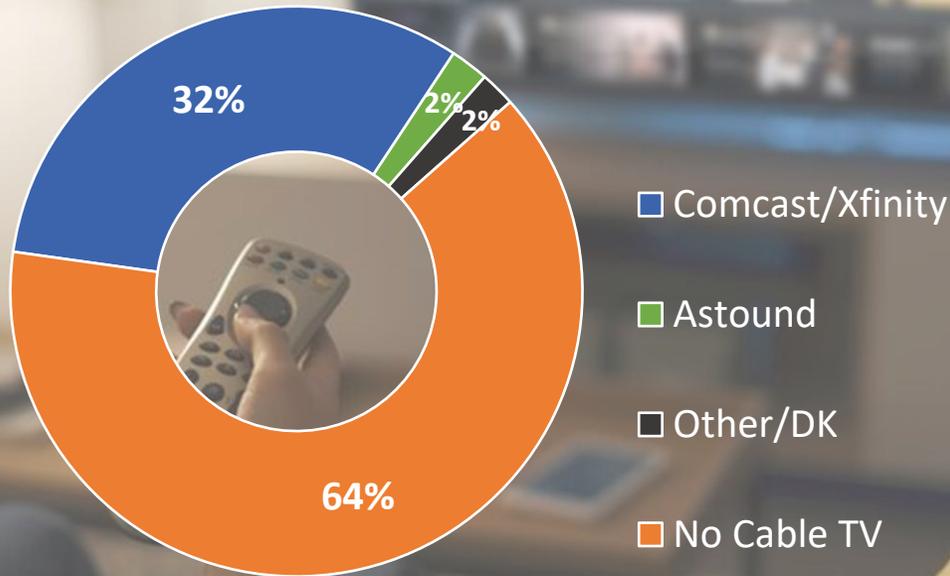
Mobile Citizen Through Connect All: \$14.95/month
Call (206) 633-1517 or www.connectall.org

For more information on internet discount programs contact the City of Seattle Digital Equity Program at
(206) 684-8498

Cable in Seattle Households

- Approximately 71,000 subscribers (about a third of Seattle households in the Comcast service area have cable TV).
- Cable TV usage is more prevalent among households with older adults (65+) and those in middle- or lower-income brackets.
- Comcast cable and broadband services are *available* to over 98% of Seattle Households.

Cable TV in the Household



Percent Which Have Cable TV (net)

Ages 18-34	Ages 35-64	Ages 65+
13%	28% ▲	61% ▲
<\$75K	\$75K-\$149.9K	\$150K+
41% ▲	38% ▲	21%

▲ Significantly higher than at least one other group

Franchise Benefits

- Low-income cable television discounts
- Complimentary cable service to schools and City buildings
- Inclusion and support of Seattle Channel and other Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) channels in cable line-up
- PEG signal quality comparable to commercial channels

Discounted Cable TV

 Assistance \$62.00 average annual savings	 Deadline None	 Time to apply 5-10 mins	 Processing time 2-3 weeks
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Comparing 2016 to 2026 Agreements

Benefit	2016 Comcast Franchise	2026 Comcast Franchise
Franchise Fee	4.4%	5.0%
PEG Fee	0.4%	0.6%
Technology Grants (Digital Equity)	Additional grants voluntarily provided during first 5 years of the franchise	Not included (Comcast provides additional voluntary support of Tech Matching Fund)
Estimated Revenues	Franchise Fee payments declined due to cord cutting	Projected increase of \$606,878 in 2026 and \$570,704 in 2027



Comparing 2016 to 2026 Agreements

Benefit	2016 Comcast Franchise	2026 Comcast Franchise
Continue providing a discount of its Basic Service rate and to allow Seattle residents eligible for the City's Utility Discount program to receive the cable discount; Discount rate is 30% of its Basic Service rate	Included	Maintained
Free cable connections and service to City buildings and schools	Included	Maintained
Access for All program that provides free internet connections for non-profits	Included	Maintained



Comparing 2016 to 2026 Agreements

Benefit	2016 Comcast Franchise	2026 Comcast Franchise
Seattle Channel content on Video on Demand	Included	Maintained
PEG signal quality comparable to commercial channels	Included	Maintained
Comcast agreed to conduct a technical review program to address code issues at MDUs	Not included	New

Legislation Schedule

- **February 12, 2026: Governance & Utilities Committee (informational briefing)**
- March 12, 2026: Governance & Utilities Committee (public hearing, briefing, discussion, and possible vote)
- March 17, 2026: Full Council Vote
- March [Date]: Mayor signs legislation; CTO signs agreement



Questions

