



Cable code amendments

Department of Information Technology

March 18, 2015



What is the cable code?

- ▶ Sets forth the general rules for all cable franchises granted in the City of Seattle.
- ▶ Outlines procedures for the granting renewal, transfer and termination of franchises.
- ▶ Contains consumer protection standards relating to services that apply to all cable operators.



Proposed changes to the code (Covered 2/4/15)

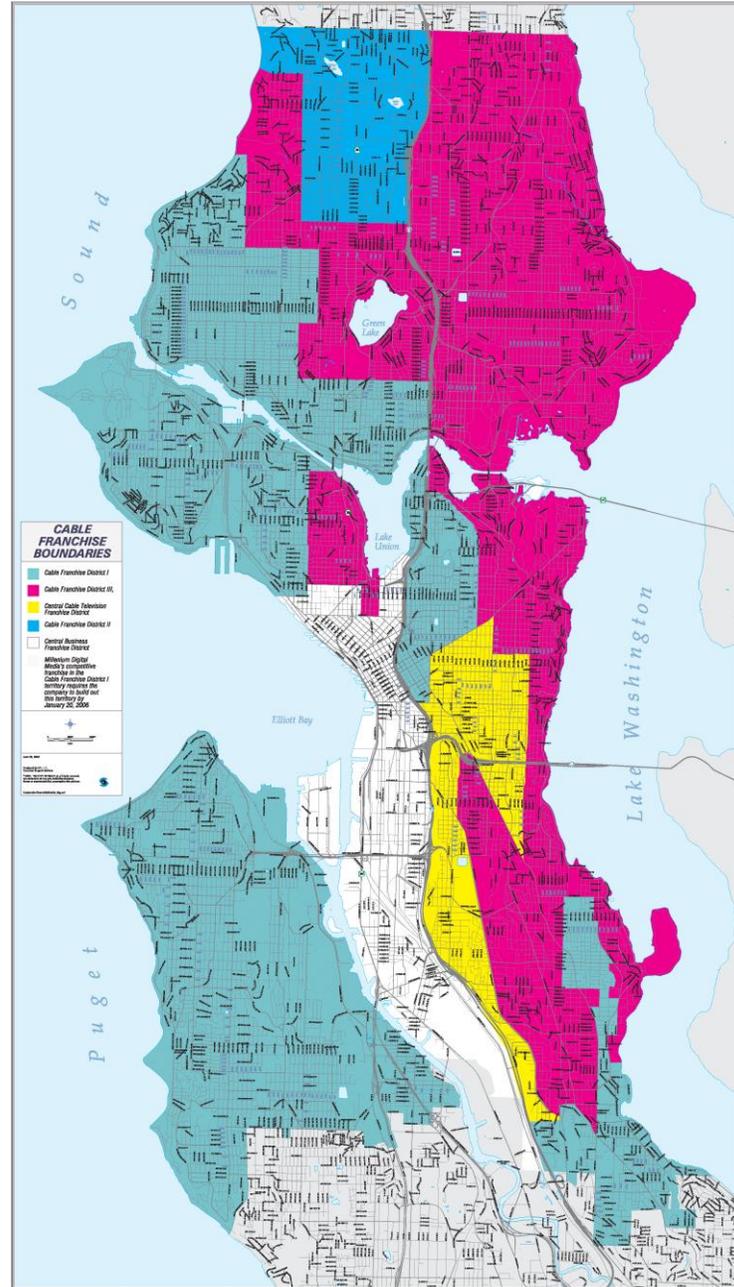
Purpose	Example
Correct inaccuracies	-In some sections the code refers to Departments that no longer exist.
Modernize	-The Code contains antiquated provisions like requiring cable operators to provide signals in color. -Include new methods for informing the public
Ensure consistency with applicable law	-Some areas such as rate regulation have mostly been preempted by Federal law.
Ensure consistency with current City practices	-Franchises are awarded for 10 years -Updated risk management and insurance requirements
Streamline procedures	-Granting and renewing franchises
Reorganize	-Placed sections such as application, granting, renewal, transfer and termination of franchises together and in logical order.



Substantive changes to the code

- ▶ Eliminating Cable Franchise Districts
- ▶ Allowing more flexible build out terms while ensuring equity
- ▶ Enhancing call answering standards and reporting
- ▶ Codifying restrictions on long-term exclusive contracts in condominium and apartments buildings
- ▶ Reserving the City's rights in a fluid regulatory environment

Substantive Changes: Eliminate Cable Franchise Districts



Ensuring equity

- ▶ Ensuring economic equity
 - ▶ New 'significant' build requirement
 - ▶ *New franchises: At all times after the date that is two years after the effective date of any new franchise, a significant portion of the total households to which grantee offers cable service shall be households that fall below the median income level as measured by census block group data.*
 - ▶ *Renewed franchises: At all times, a significant portion of the total households to which grantee offers cable service shall be households that fall below the median income level as measured by census block group data.*
 - ▶ Twice annual meetings with new providers
 - ▶ Annual report to Council on status of provider equity obligations
 - ▶ New language allows City to impose penalties and additional build out obligations to ensure equity

Enhancing call answering standards and reporting

- ▶ Limiting customer call wait times on IVR to 3 minutes
- ▶ Requiring all transfers to a customer service representative within 30 seconds
- ▶ Enhanced reporting standards on call wait and transfer times
- ▶ New language allows City to impose larger credits to customers

Codifying restrictions on long-term exclusive contracts

- ▶ Based on Councilmember feedback, we're taking the following actions for outreach to condo and apartment residents:
 - ▶ Informational mailing to multi-dwelling unit (MDU) residents about their rights under the new code
 - ▶ Planned informational presentation in April for MDU owners and managers

Questions?

