

## **Comcast Franchise – Now Being Renegotiated - What Does it Have to Do with Broadband?**

The Mayor's Office of Cable and Communications is hosting a public meeting concerning the current renegotiation of the Comcast franchise, this Tuesday, December 1 at 6:30 PM at the War Memorial building across from City Hall. Please attend and give your input and ask your questions.

### **What Is the Comcast Franchise?**

It is a non-exclusive agreement between Comcast and Baltimore City allowing Comcast to provide cable television services. To do so, Comcast receives privileged access to city right-of-way. The current franchise ends in December, 2016.

### **What Is the Comcast Franchise NOT?**

It is not exclusive. Another company could apply for a similar franchise but apparently hasn't. The franchise does not apply to Comcast's provision of Internet or telephone services.

### **What Does the City Get in Return from Comcast?**

Comcast pays 60 cents per cable TV subscriber per month plus 5% of gross revenue for cable TV services. Comcast also pays an additional fee when using city conduit or poles and provides public access TV stations.

### **What is the Relevance of the Franchise to Broadband?**

Some say not very much and stress that the franchise applies only to TV. That isn't entirely true since the cable that carries TV now also carries for most, Internet and/or telephone. To the extent providers like Comcast are exclusive within an area and control content and to the degree services like Internet are bundled along with TV and/or telephone, these huge corporations may exert unfair and anti-competitive pressures. In Baltimore, there is no choice beyond Comcast for broadband. Learn more about this by reading FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler's comments, ["The Facts and Future of Broadband Competition."](#)

### **Are Baltimore Customers Satisfied with Comcast?**

The ongoing Baltimore Broadband Coalition survey shows strong dissatisfaction among the 900 Comcast customers who have responded. When asked if they were satisfied with their current cost, performance and customer service, the percent dissatisfied was 75%, 58% and 86% respectively. Most importantly, 96% were dissatisfied with the lack of choice they have in broadband in Baltimore.

Please pass this update on to friends and neighbors.