



## COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION DRAFT

### COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

#### RECOMMENDATION NUMBER: 20230111-4 REGARDING: Intelligent Infrastructure Resolution

**WHEREAS**, the active management of Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan by the City Council, the office of Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs (TARA), the Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission (CTTC), and Digital Empowerment Community of Austin (DECA) partners has identified the digital divide as historically rooted challenge to our stated vision which will require a substantial investment in both physical and digital infrastructure to bridge;

**WHEREAS**, in 2016, the Austin City Council formed a citizen-led Bond Election Advisory Task Force (Task Force) to identify, study, prioritize, and propose various projects for consideration of bond funding, which included infrastructure;

**WHEREAS**, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), a \$1.2 trillion investment in U.S. Infrastructure, was passed into law in November 2021.

**WHEREAS**, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) issued notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs) for more than \$44 billion in federal funding to the following three programs, as part of the IIJA: (1) The Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (BEAD - \$42.5 billion); (2) The Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program (MMG - \$1 billion); and (3) The State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program (DEAP - \$60 million);

**WHEREAS**, the Texas Broadband Development Office (BDO) is the steward of state and federal dollars intended to close the digital divide, by increasing access to reliable, high-speed internet in the state;

**WHEREAS**, Comptroller Hegar sent a letter to the Texas Congressional Delegation expressing his concerns about the NTIA's Notice of Funding Opportunity for the BEAD program, which appears to indicate that states need to prioritize end-to-end fiber connectivity. Comptroller Hegar's main concern with this stipulation is that, in many rural areas of Texas, fiber technology is not financially feasible. Further, the NTIA's new rules run counter to Texas' — and the IIJA's — legislative intent of being technology-neutral with respect to broadband infrastructure programs;

**WHEREAS**, the CTTC anticipates the Comptroller's concerns above will likely require the consideration of a variety of broadband technologies that will include Fixed-Wireless, 5G (including Wireless Broadband), Small Cell and other data-intensive solutions besides fiber technology

**WHEREAS**, the CTTC has been involved in a preliminary evaluation of 5G Intelligent Infrastructure solutions (e.g. Public Information Network Nodes - PINNs) that leverage a

plug-and-play model conducive for more efficient pole installation by multiple carriers and could potentially enable shared conduit or alternative Edge computing resource usage;

**WHEREAS**, standards play an important role in ensuring openness and competition

**WHEREAS**, 5G is still in a nascent stage of adoption.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

The CTTC recommends that the City of Austin conducts a thorough evaluation of available solutions to ensure that the selected approach provides optimal solutions, based on standards, to address the needs of domestic, enterprise, research and government (including security).

The CTTC further recommends the Austin City Council form an (Intelligent Infrastructure, 5G, Integrated Services, or TBD named) Advisory Task Force to identify, study, prioritize, and propose various implementation ready projects to provide the NTIA and the Texas BDO, as part of the City of Austin Strategic Plan. Further the CTTC recommends that this task force include representatives from Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs (TARA), the CTTC, Austin Public Library (APL), Communications and Technology Management (CTM), The Innovation Office, Public Safety, Austin Transportation Department (ATD), Austin Energy (AE), CapMetro, and other suitable departments.

The CTTC finally recommends the adoption of appropriate standards in the implementation and propagation of 5G solutions in cellular and broadband service to ensure every resident of Austin is offered freedom of choice of carriers at acceptable prices.

Date of Approval: 1/11/2023

Record of the Vote: Motion to approve the item as edited mad by Chair Pitts, seconded by Commissioner Garza, passed on a vote of 8-0.

ATTEST:

 \_\_\_\_\_

Jesse Rodriguez

Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs

City of Austin