



**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
COUNCIL CONSIDERATION REQUEST**

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TO: Mayor and City Council  
FROM: Councilman Manny Pelaez, District 8  
COPIES TO: Sheryl Sculley, City Manager; Leticia Vacek, City Clerk; Andy Segovia, City Attorney; John Peterek, Assistant to the City Manager; Christopher Callanen, Assistant to City Council  
SUBJECT: Net Neutrality and Open Internet Access - CCR  
DATE: April 2, 2018

Issue Proposed for Consideration

I ask for your support for the inclusion of the following item on the agenda of the earliest available meeting of the Governance Committee:

Discussion of net neutrality and open internet access policies.

Brief Background

Often touted and now officially labeled “Cyber City USA,” San Antonio is poised to become a world-wide leader in innovation and technology. Unfortunately with such a title it is easy to overlook the Digital Divide, the ever-widening gap for our most vulnerable populations and their lack of access to the internet.

As detailed in a 2016 report by the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, the Digital Divide describes “the gap between people who have access to broadband services and how to use the internet and those who do not have such access or knowledge.”

Compounding this is the recent repeal by The Federal Communications Commission of what is commonly referred to as “Net Neutrality.” Under this order, internet service providers (ISPs) were prevented from throttling, blocking or limiting content on the internet, essentially granting equal access to the Internet and the services residents have grown accustomed to, including those provided by the City of San Antonio.

In the absence of Net Neutrality, ISPs are able to create tiered services that will make it increasingly difficult for those who cannot afford or lack access to the internet, further increasing the Digital Divide in our City.

As a first step to address this issue, Mayor Nirenberg recently signed onto the “Cities Open Internet Pledge” that seeks to, under the extent permitted by law and within our control, maintain an open internet free of the throttling, blocking, or the limiting of content.



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Therefore, in order to ensure San Antonio residents have access to an open internet and access to city services regardless of income or zip code, I ask that city staff provide recommendations on how the City accomplishes or might work towards the following:

1. Procurement of applicable internet services from companies that do not block, throttle, or provide paid prioritization of content on sites that cities run to provide critical services and information to their residents.
2. Ensuring an open internet connection with any free or subsidized service we offer to our residents.
3. Avoiding paid prioritization when providing internet service directly to our residents, such as through free public Wi-Fi or municipal broadband.
4. To the extent permitted, requiring clear and accessible notices of filtering, blocking and prioritization policies with enforceable penalties for violations to protect consumers from deceptive practices.
5. Monitoring the practices of internet service providers so consumers and regulators can know when a company is violating open internet principles or commitments.
6. Encouraging consumer use of ISPs, including municipal options, that abide by open internet policies.

Submitted for Council consideration by:




  
Councilman Manny Pelaez, District 8

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Supporting Councilmembers' Signatures (4 only)

District

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