

September 10, 2024 Meeting - Seattle Community Technology Advisory Board

Topics covered included: Outreach and Community Engagement for Comcast Franchise Renewal; Digital Equity Program and Broadband Manager; Seattle Community Network (SCN); Digital Equity Learning Network King County (DELN) – CTAB Participation; 2024-2025 CTAB Workplan and Committees

This meeting was held: September 10, 2024; 6:00-7:45 p.m., via Webex

Attending:

Board Members: Phillip Meng, Coleman Entringer, Omari Stringer, Isabel Rodriguez, Femi Adebayo, Hailey Dickson, Aishah Bomani

Public: Dorene Cornwell, Esther Jang, Priya Singh, Amanda Lai, Call-in user 1, Harte Daniels

Staff: Alice Lawson, Jon Morrison Winters, Brenda Tate, Vinh Tang, Tara Zaremba, Cass Magnuski

19 In Attendance

Phillip Meng: Hailey Dickson is our new board member. We usually start with a round of introductions, where you live in Seattle, and then anything else you would like to volunteer. We will do a more complete board introduction at our next meeting, as discussed earlier. It's great to have you with us.

Hailey Dickson: Sure. Sounds good.

Phillip Meng: Well, folks, it looks like we have a quorum. Let's get started with introductions. Good evening, everyone! Happy Tuesday, and welcome to the September meeting of the Seattle Community Technology Advisory Board. We have some new faces in the call today, which is very, very exciting. So, let's get started with a round of introductions. I'll start with the room. Then we will go with the order as presented by Webex.

INTRODUCTIONS

From Chat: Femi Adebayo board member calling in from Lynnwood. I had my wisdom tooth taken out yesterday so cannot talk much today.

Phillip Meng: We've got a great agenda today. We will be discussing the outreach and community engagement for the Comcast franchise renewal. We will be learning about the Seattle Community Network. And we have some exciting, forward-looking action items for the board, joining the DELN, discussing our work plan for the coming months, including a discussion of some future potential committees that we have had some discussions about over the last couple of months. Before we do that, we want to get the board members' approval for the minutes and agenda. Can I get a motion to approve the agenda from agenda from our last meeting in July from a board member, please?

Aishah Bomani: I move to approve the agenda.

Phillip Meng: Thanks, Aishah. Do we have a second?

Femi Adebayo: Second.

Phillip Meng: Thanks, Femi. All in favor? All opposed? Any abstentions? Motion carries. Same thing with the minutes. Can I get a motion to approve the minutes?

Isabel Rodriguez: I move to approve.

Phillip Meng: Thanks, Isabel. Can I get a second?

Aishah Bomani: I'll second.

Phillip Meng: Thank you. All in favor? I think that's everybody. Motion passes. Let's get started with the Outreach and Community Engagement for Comcast Franchise Renewal. Jon Morrison Winters, would you like to begin by introducing?

From Chat: Phillip Meng

A fun icebreaker for everyone for the chat: What is your dream collaboration? Who would you love to collaborate with and what would the project be? (even consider historical figures)

From Chat: Hailey Dickson

Icebreaker answer:

I'd love to collaborate with the Center for Humane Technology on a project to protect youth digital wellbeing and introduce their curricula on technology and mental health in local schools

From Chat: Femi Adebayo board member

calling in from Lynnwood. I had my wisdom tooth taken out yesterday so cannot talk much today.

OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR COMCAST FRANCHISE RENEWAL

Jon Morrison Winters: Thank you, Phillip. Yes. I just wanted to thank CTAB again for inviting me back, and inviting Priya Singh to talk about this project that we're doing right now. I did not bring slides, Priya, because I didn't want to rehash the last presentation that I gave to all of you about franchise renewal, and specifically about the Comcast franchise renewal. I would be happy to rehash any of that or go over that again at any time for review. But today I just want to provide a really brief update, and then hand things off to Priya Singh. So, by way of an update, and the very high level is one of our roles at the City is as the local franchise authority for cable television. Even

though cable television is no longer the technology that is cutting edge, it is still a technology that is offered to our residents, currently by two cable providers, one of which is Comcast. Cable providers, in order to provide cable television services in the City, and use the right-of-way, for that they are required to have a cable franchise with the City. And our policy and our approach has been to have franchise agreements that last for ten years. And so, the cable franchise agreement expires at the end of next year, or the beginning of 2026. So we have begun a process of ascertainment. That is sort of the jargon term, but it really is a process of due diligence to understand not only the performance of Comcast, and how they have been providing service, and whether or not they have been meeting the requirements of the franchise, but also understanding the cable-related needs and interests of Seattle's residents. So that is the very high level process that we're doing right now. And a big part of that process is coming to the engagement and again, ascertaining the cable-related needs and interests of residents. We have partnered with Priya Singh from The Playback in order to do some of this work and do some of this community engagement work that she is going to be talking about. Getting underway, it was a little bit delayed. I can't remember exactly what I presented in terms of the timeline last time, but some of this work was a little bit delayed. But we are ready to hit the ground running and get going. So this is one of the first community engagement activities that we're doing for this project. So, Priya is here to speak to all of you about that. There are several other components that we are engaged in right now. I won't go into them right now. For today, we are focused on the community engagement piece, but I'm happy to come back and provide another update further on in the process. As I mentioned, the Comcast franchise doesn't expire until the very end of next year, and so it's a long process, it's actually a three-year process typically, for a franchise renewal. And so we've been working on it for a year, and we will be working on it for another year. So, we're kind of right in the middle at this point. Unless there are any questions, and I'm happy to answer more general questions about the cable franchising and the franchise renewal process before I hand it off to Priya Singh. If you think of something, you also can ask at the end, or in Priya Singh's presentation. I know that she is going to want to engage and talk to all of you about this and this process, and the work that she is doing. I will just hand it off to her at this time and have her present. I'm very happy to be able to work with her on this project. We did a project together related to the King County digital equity plan. King County may have had another name, but really, it was the King County digital equity plan that Priya wrote. She put a ton of work into that, and now I am very pleased to be working with her on this project. So, without further ado, Priya, I will hand it off to you.

Priya Singh: Thank you so much, Jon. It is great to be here. I worked with David Keyes and Michael Mattmiller, six, seven, eight, nine years ago now. So, it's exciting to be back and working on this Seattle IT project. As Jon mentioned, I am not going to rehash all of the details around cable franchise renewal. I just want to share a little bit about what we're going to be doing, and a timeline that we're going to be following, and then ways that you all can be engaged if you would like.

We are engaging in a few ways. The first is that Seattle IT hired a research firm, Olympic Research, to do a mail survey that went out to residents. That survey has been completed, and the initial findings and report have been submitted. So, that's really going to underlay a lot of the qualitative work that we do is going to be centered around a lot of this statistically valid work that Olympic Research has done. So, we can consider that box checked and we are moving forward. My firm, in connection with PRR, another community engagement firm, are going to do three types of engagement. We are going to do online participant opportunities, and we are still defining some of those details. We are hoping those can be a little bit more fun, shorter, to get a sentiment read on how folks feel about Comcast. People all know how folks feel about Comcast, but we want to hear from people. Next, we are going to do some community listening sessions. This is what we are thinking specifically about certain populations that might be under-represented in the resident survey that went out. These are low income populations, immigrant and refugees populations, BIPOC, seniors, those who are incarcerated or formerly incarcerated, just to give you a sense that we do want to think about those groups and the specific needs that they have that might be different from the general Seattle population. So, that is really where a lot of our qualitative work will be happening, to make partnership and connection with CBO's, with senior centers, etc. So, we will be doing listening sessions there with residents to understand their stand, their needs, and build on that great qualitative work that has already been finished. And finally, we are going to do some in-depth stakeholder interviews. The listening sessions will run about 30 minutes for a group of, let's say, six to eight folks, and then we will have a similar amount of time to do one-on-one deeper interviews to get even a better sense of needs and how folks are dealing with the transition to internet, as Jon was mentioning. Cable is no longer the cutting edge technology, so what does that look like for folks. And then, for those who are still using cable, what does that mean for them? Are they getting their needs met through, let's say, public access programming. Are they getting the low-cost initiatives that they need to be successful in connecting with cable programming. Is the language around their contracts, does that make sense. Or do they feel like they are being plagued with bait and switch programs, etc. So, those are the kinds of sentiments that we're hoping to hear from residents and to understand how their needs are evolving. For example, one of the things that came up in the survey is the change in sports from cable to streaming services, and the huge impact that that has on communities who have been cable-based. So, it will be exciting to go deeper on some of those subjects. And finally, engaging with all of you -- and we are going to talk a little bit about that and possible ways that you can connect into this work in two slides.

I am familiar with Webex, so if there is a question, do let me know. Our engagement timeline, as Jon mentioned, is a little bit behind but still being a frame that works well for all of the other pieces for the ascertainment that he was talking about. We are using the rest of September really to finalize our materials. In October, we are going to be doing

the bulk of the outreach, so that's again to CBO's and individuals doing those interviews, doing some online engagement. In November and December, that's where we are going to really be thinking about how those qualitative pieces connect with the quantitative pieces. We have fuller analysis coming back to you all in that timeframe, as well as saying, 'Here is what we heard,' and then drafting the report, itself. That needs to get delivered. So, that's a really rough timeline there. As you all know, engagement outreach, the timelines wriggle a little bit on both ends there. For example, in November, we really start looking at the holidays. So, we want to use the six weeks in October and the beginning of November to really solidify that outreach so that we can use the quiet time in November to do inter-office work writing.

Here are some ways that you all can join us/help us. One is if you have great connections with CBO's, we would be happy for you to do those introductions for us. We are reaching out to folks who are already in the Seattle IT environment landscape, so we are connecting with the Technology Matching Fund grantees and applicants. But if you all are connected to others -- so for example, connecting to Seattle Public Schools, we would love to have an interview to learn more about the work that is happening there. So, if you can connect us with CBO's, if you are in a community that has residents and you can pull together a listening session, we are providing compensation for that. So, if you want to host a community session, we would love that. If you could share any opportunities, we have some blurbs that we run up and you go, hey, I know this newsletter, we would be happy to write that blurb and put it in, we would welcome that. And then, finally, we would like you to read the report, to ask other questions. As I mentioned, we will come back in a few months with a high level (unintelligible), and so we will do that. But if you would like to be more involved the report writing, the report analysis, and hearing from the community, we would love that, as well. The bottom line here is you can be as involved as you would like to be. We urge that very deeply. We would welcome that. And if I say, hey, we've got 17 other things going on, we just want to hear from you in a couple of months, that's great, too.

So, that really wraps my slides. Short, sweet, and to the point. We're going to be going out and talking to folks via community-based organizations. We're going to be listening to residents. We would love to hear things like we would love to connect with you. That's what we're doing. We're talking to folks and we really want to hear their opinions. And we will be putting that into a report along with several other pieces. This is my husband walking in the door behind me. So, that's what we're up to. Any questions, ideas? I welcome them.

From Chat: Hailey Dickson

I'd be happy to leverage tiktok or other social platforms for social listening insights

From Chat:Meng: bd opp...questions

Esther: is it also...

Dorene: how get in touch

From Chat:

Jon: approved by mayor/council franchise auth

Meng: understood...

Meng: email in chat...

From Chat: Priya Singh (The Playback)

priya@theplayback.info

206-525-5888

From Chat: Dorene Cornwell

6:31 PM

dorenefc@gmail.com

From Chat: Esther

6:33 PM

It would be really interesting to see what terms we could get negotiated for digital equity

Phillip Meng: Fantastic! Thanks so much, Priya. One piece to start, I think that the board would very much welcome the opportunity to review report findings, so when they are further along in draft or published form, wherever we can be more helpful, we would love it if it could be shared back with the board. We will circulate it and connect on that.

Priya Singh: Awesome. Happy to do that.

Phillip Meng: Opening it up to the floor. Does anyone have any questions?

Priya Singh: Okay! I'm going to take that to mean that I had a great, perfectly crisp presentation. Alice, do you have a question?

Alice Lawson: I would be happy to connect you with other CBO's. For the listening questions, is it compensation not only for the organizers but also for the attendees? Like the people who actually give data?

Priya Singh: Yes.

Harte Daniels: Dorene has her hand up.

Dorene Cornwell: My question is just how can we get in touch with you to follow up. Do you work for Seattle IT or ... I wasn't quite clear.

Priya Singh: Good question. I am a consultant for Seattle IT. I can drop my email address and phone number into the chat. Feel free to reach out to me.

Dorene Cornwell: I will drop my email in the chat, too, and then we can connect. That would be great.

From Chat: Priya Singh (The Playback)

priya@theplayback.info

206-525-5888

From Chat: Dorene Cornwell

6:31 PM

dorenefc@gmail.com

From Chat: Esther Jang

6:33 PM

It would be really interesting to see what terms we could get negotiated for digital equity

Phillip Meng: Apologies. I think I missed this earlier. What does the timeline look like for the ultimate position around the franchise renewal?

Jon Morrison Winters: The high level next year is our year for negotiation with Comcast. And working backwards, it does have to be approved by the Mayor and then it will be approved by City Council. So, really we're looking at third quarter ideally of 2025. We would have an agreement in hand. We will see if we are able to get that. We have reports from other cities that these negotiations are extending longer than they have in the past, particularly for some of the other cable providers. This is a unique time for the cable industry, and a really interesting time for cable television in particular. There is so much cord-cutting happening that it's really a question mark in terms of what the future is going to look like. So, these have been interesting negotiations that happened in other municipalities and other local franchise authorities. But, yes, ideally we would have an agreement in hand by the third quarter of 2025.

Phillip Meng: Got it. Understood. So, thanks again, Priya and Jon. Supporting with community engagement is something that I know that CTAB board members, committee members, and members of the community who join us in meetings. I know that this is a topic that this community is generally very interested in. I think it may be helpful for us to organize a follow-up small group where we discuss some of those outreach options and more concrete next steps, provided that we don't hit our limitations in terms of quorum. Can I get a quick show of hands on who might be interested in a follow-up, either offline or through a meeting on engagement here? Okay. And the quorum number is four right here, is that right?

Vinh Tang: Yes.

Phillip Meng: Then I think we should be in good shape. In that case, Esther Jang, Hailey Dickson, Aishah Bomani, and Dorene Cornwell, we will set up some follow-up time on some of the ideas that have been discussed, like the great point that Hailey Dickson made in the chat, on social listening, insights, things like that to discuss in more detail. Does that all sound good, folks?

Priya Singh: Sounds great. Do you want me to coordinate that? Is someone from your team coordinating that.

Phillip Meng: We can reach out from CTAB's side, just for scheduling, and go from there.

Priya Singh: Okay. Awesome.

Phillip Meng: And Priya, I see that you have posted your email address in the chat. We will use that for outreach. Thanks so much for joining us. Folks, are there any other questions we have for Priya and Jon. In general, I try my best to see hands and thumbs ups. If I miss anything, please let me know.

Priya Singh: Thank you, everyone. Bye bye.

Phillip Meng: Now, we're very excited to turn it over to Esther Jang, director of the local connectivity lab at the Seattle Community Network. Vinh Tang or Jon Morrison Winters, would either of you like to make a quick introduction?

SEATTLE COMMUNITY NETWORK

Alice Lawson: I project, the City is trying to do what we can to support it as another tool for our community members to have in this area of digital equity and digital access. And as Esther Jang will also share, it's not just about the access. This program is doing incredible things with teaching people incredible skills and empowerment around networking and network maintenance. Our role through the Digital Equity Program works with the University of Washington, King County, the City of Seattle, Seattle Public Schools who are using their rooftop access. Lumen has given a couple of connections through our Access for All program with backhaul on a couple of the sites. We've helped the local connectivity lab to connect with Seattle Public Libraries. So, that's where our interest is, and we are continuing to this day to try to find ways, maybe, to find access to dark fiber for some future sites. So, we are doing what we can to help with this, but the work, as you can see, in the final column there, in the local connectivity lab is tremendously community-based. Lots of the outreach that Esther Jang has done has been excellent. And with that, Esther, I'm going to turn it over to you, and I will just be your slide moderator. was going to make a quick introduction. As I said, we've been working on this. Let me get this PowerPoint together. Okay. Thank you, everybody. I'm Alice Lawson. And in the Digital Equity Program, one of the niche roles that I have is Wireless Affairs. So, last month in CTAB, I talked to you a little bit about how Wireless Affairs works. But back in 2020, I first engaged with Esther Jang, who is the **mastermind behind the Seattle Community Network, which has origins in testing out the use of community broadband radio service spectrum as a way of getting connectivity out to people who can't afford it. So, even though in Seattle we know through our tech access, there are very well-connected communities, with 98 percent reporting having access to the internet. We have and will continue to have a persistent affordability problem. So, Esther and her group are looking at an incredible community-based solution to build networks that can provide free access using CBRS, but then also using WiFi. She is going to go into more detail on that. But I just wanted to share that the City's background in support of this, as well as King County. It started with some funding for a couple initial pilot sites, and then, this year, we've also granted additional Technology Matching Funds to the Seattle Community Network continued their expansion into a tiny home villages. That's really the role we've played as a City. So, while this is a very much a community-based network and**

Esther Jang: I will start with community networks as a concept. This is my academic background. I came into computer science, I'm actually from a totally different field, in order to study community networks. After I started out to first do a service project connecting a rural school in (unintelligible) to the internet back in 2012. And this is a picture of another cellular net component using open-source software that we work on at UW in Mexico. That was with a small rural village that didn't have any connectivity.

Community networks are basically networks that are owned and operated in some kind of community participatory way. These can have many different formats, so, for example, just to focus on one in the US for now, they have a big mesh network which is a wireless network where people give service to their neighbors kind of from point to point, and it can be multiple hubs. But they do end up having on very tall skyscrapers that become hubs, and so a kit of users can connect to the network through the hubs, and they are essentially a community volunteer-operated ISP. They are quite a large network with almost 1,000 (unintelligible) and they put out faster and cheaper service than you can get in most other parts of the city. But they are fully volunteer-operated.

If you've heard something about community networks around the US, you might have heard of the Detroit Community Technology Project. That's another very famous community network where it is a nonprofit-operated network where you have digital stewards who are trained and hired from the community to actually install the networks. These are paid employees who go and install networks that are mainly based off a church as a hub. The churches donate their roof space and then communities specifically in low income areas are connected through these networks. This is another video that you should watch if you have it. This is the Equitable Internet Initiative that has been the name of this project, and In Seattle, when I was doing this, the ideation for our network.

The idea was maybe to combine the best parts of these two types of networks, so the Equitable Internet Initiative is digital equity first, non-profit-driven. And there are lots of training programs for these stewards who come from the community, so it is essentially creating new tech workers out of community members, which is a goal in itself. But at NYC Mesh, it's more of a dynamic of people who are already tech workers and have tech skills, and applying their skills to give back to the communities as a volunteer initiative. And so, in the midst of this ideation that we were doing in 2019, the pandemic hit, and it was totally a disaster, but at the same time, it was a really forcing function actually getting the network up. We got an initial grant from King County.

And with an additional piece of funding to implement three sites -- and I'll talk more about the actual internet sites we installed in a moment. I put out a call for action to do a massive recruitment of volunteers, because I knew that we had a lot of tech workers in the City, and there were a lot of people just in the UW community, who wanted to volunteer. We said we've got funding to put up basically three cellular network sites using CBRS, That's Citizens Broadband Radio Service spectrum that the FCC had just opened up, which could be used for the first time by people without a permanent license that they had to pay millions of dollars for. So, we would have to register our devices in the FCC database, but we could basically use this spectrum to transmit cellular networks. Cellular networks can connect both , as you know, the HotSpot modems, often called customer premises equipment or even mobile phones.

What we did was we partnered with community organizations, community centers, such as the Filipino community of Seattle. That was our first site. Eventually, after our first three sites, we got two more sites funded through the City of Seattle for the public schools. So, we had Garfield High School and Franklin High School added. We chose tall buildings and we put a transmitter on there, which is a cellular-based station that would serve coverage way beyond what you could serve with WiFi coverage, which is usually limited to a building. But cellular coverage could go up to a mile. Then you could eventually connect Mobile 5G home internet, like little tower you put into your house. We would have an outdoor unit that is basically a high-gain, more powerful receiver outside the home, and then bring in an ethernet cable to power a router with internet access.

Just as a quick overview, if you have never heard of CBRS, I'm sure you have, it is this new licensing scheme which is quite innovative around the world, actually. The Navy used to use it for their radar, but now we have priority access license holders and general access users, where the priority access can be auctioned off to Verizon or Spectrum or whomever and they get to use that spectrum if the need to, but if they are not using it, then the general users, such as ourselves, can transmit there. That's how that spectrum works.

So, the sites we have been installing, the Filipino community of Seattle -- these are the ones we currently have. We actually have to uninstall one of them. Garfield High School, Franklin High School, Seattle Public Library, Surge Tacoma, and we also have two more sites in the works through a National Science Foundation grant , which is using these cell sites for emergency resilience purposes, where the sites would have multiple redundant sources of internet access upstream, and there would be potentially

resilient to earthquakes, other disasters that could cut off regular connectivity and overload the cell networks.

homes by attaching these LTE modems, little receivers, basically if you have T-

There are two sister networks in Seattle and Westport. They are going up based on that grant.

I would say that the overall concept of what we're trying to do in terms of the community part, is we are knitting together a social fabric of both volunteers and end users. We are creating what I call a teaching network. We do want to provide free internet for people who can't afford services or devices, we want to do free device distribution to make sure that they can access the networks and help them get online. So, if they need workshops, we teach workshops. We do service learning. So, we have Seattle Central College interns; we have UW students actually do this as part of their research or their study training. And then, these Digital Stewards programs primarily with the Black (unintelligible) Research Project for both high schoolers and adults. We want to create this real solidarity, working together to build these networks. This picture is a Nickelsville Central District residents, a tiny home village, and so also with the physical infrastructure which adds a practicum for running. And so you can think of it as kind of a teaching hospital. But the broader vision is not only to provide the internet access, but also allowing the grassroots community to come up with where the locations are to install, and have the residents participate in this process, we are finding the gaps and needs in Seattle. So, I mentioned the tiny house villages and we found, in asking around in the community, the unhoused communities are sort of the frontline for both environmental conditions and lack of infrastructure, including internet. **the network was built with the residents, as well. And these are some pictures from the training programs we have supported with our build-out networking volunteers, like our experts, but**

Often, tiny house villages like Nickelsville, suffer from issues like power and power quality and air quality, and all of this stuff. Through Nickelsville, we also got in touch with the Share/Wheel organization, the tent cities. They have more semi-permanent that are also self-organized, and other shelters.. We are starting to provide and have an install scheduled for the 14th, actually, in our first tent city site.

So, the users that we currently have with residents -- we've Catherine's Space, the Filipino Community Village, which are both low-income housing in South Seattle. These

are WiFi networks that are powered off of 4G modems on our LTE networks. In this slide, we've got our cell site transmitting LTE to these modems, and that has turned into WiFi for the users. But most of our sites right now with users on them are actually WiFi attached to other forms, like backhaul or upstream connectivity, including Lumen fiber and now we have T-Mobile 5G. These T-Mobile 5G sites, because we had been getting some free connections from City of Seattle's agreement with Lumen, but some sites just could not access that service because the infrastructure wasn't there. So, we had to use -- actually I have one right here. It's a little 5G modem that you can put a SIM card into. It's like a HotSpot, but it has an ethernet port out, and we just connect that to a big WiFi network that we put up in the village. I've been using this one because we didn't have WiFi at our home, because we just moved in.

Here's an example of the WiFi network that we would install at a tiny house village. We, in fact, did install this one earlier this summer, and we put up some WiFi access points as an example of the heat map, and we make an install plan. These slides are just from a presentation where I was teaching, showing people how to do an install plan and do an install.

You would do a site survey where you walk around the village and see where you would mount the access points. You figure out -- well okay -- we can plug in the internet access in the office. And then you figure out where the cabling is going to run. Often, in tiny house villages, there is often already lighting, and there are already security camera cables that we can use, and then we mount our access points. And we just make a map, usually on the floor plan. Once we have installed everything, and we have monitoring and everything, and we can get some idea of the traffic that is being used. For example, at maple Leaf Village, which we also just installed, this is -- actually our staff needed to be updated -- over the course of a month, the total usage of about half of the access points. We couldn't get the full ones for this snapshot, but you can see that there is quite a lot of downloads. That would be the downloads where the access points that are receiving from the upstream. And then, the (unintelligible) would be the upload.

We have found that backhaul, so finding that upstream source of internet is often the most difficult thing for setting up a tiny house village, and honestly, any type of install. It often involves unavoidable costs. Like they had to pay for a roaming connections, and in some cases, we had to find emergency backup connections. For example, we thought that we could use one SIM card donated by the Seattle Public Library HotSpot lending program, but we found that that didn't work in our case, so we had to find another solution. So, we do have these sources of recurring costs, and with those come limited

bandwidth. So, it's always a struggle to find the resources and the connections to make that happen. But we've been doing pretty well in conjunction with the City.

Just to thank the community organizations that we have been working with, we have both community organizations, especially our network hosts, the public schools and the community centers we work with, and also the digital stewards volunteers, and everyone else who contributes. Thank you so much.

Phillip Meng: Thank you so much, Esther and Alice Lawson. What a great presentation. What a great program. I know I have quite a few questions, but I don't want to monopolize the time. I want to start with the folks on the call, starting with Harte Daniels.

Harte Daniels: Esther, are you familiar with Redhook Initiative?

Esther Jang: Yes, they are definitely one of the inspirations for this project.

Harte Daniels: Okay, so in CTAB, this program was what I was trying to talk to people about coming off of the team where we did use the Redhook Initiative and invest it with FEMA money, etc. During Sandy, their comments on the digital steward portion of it isn't -- they were finding that that is not, the training was not what was motivating their volunteers, etc. I'm sure I have the contact information for some of those people. Have you also studied what they did in community work to make the decisions. There was somebody who did a master's program on that? High Availability Disaster Recovery.

Esther Jang: Actually, no.

Harte Daniels: They actually had some gaming techniques, etc., with people who had never done collaboration or whatnot. Then the other was -- you mentioned SIM cards. On occasion I volunteered around the post-graduate naval school, interagency field experimentation, usually at Paso Lobres in California, sometimes they will do an HADR, and when I was principle investigator there, (unintelligible). And especially

during stress situations, about being able to use (unintelligible) for how they collaborate. In Sandy, they had a problem with the COWS cancelling out each other's signals and what have you. So, I don't know if you have done any of the research or looked at any of the papers coming out of the Naval Postgraduate School program. Right now, I think they are focused on the Moor fires. Or you can make an inquiry whether they are going to do another HADR. High Availability Disaster Recovery for those initials. Government and special military I would love to recommend. But I could not get anybody interested in the digital stewards program here back in 2013, 2014 when I brought it to CTAB and the chairs at that point in time, so I am delighted. I also worked off of some of the things that were done in Africa, primarily to be (unintelligible) HADR for low-income people traveling in low bandwidth communities, which is why I got on the team in the first place. So, I think motivation of the disaster is not just can you learn to possess what they were finding. I don't know if you have kept up with Redhook, what they are doing, and that they are getting in city money, but they are still providing service, the last time I heard. But following up on what some of the founders have told me and about the motivation not necessarily being teaching people tech, but learning and supporting their community, and also learning that they don't like tech. I think the motivating factor and linking more money, I am happy to see the NSF grant but more in that area about the Office of Emergency Management, how to take care of your family, the resilience that some people feel, especially low-income people and people of color might feel that they have to do for themselves because government won't take care of them. This might be a motivating factor for bringing some of them in to learn and to grow and to learn how to organize. So, afterwards -- I'm not the best in my health right now, but I can possibly find the master's thesis for the person that did this with Redhook, which they did that work starting with community first, and then picking up the Detroit Digital Stewards model. If any of that is of interest to you, we can talk sometime in a non-copious use of time.

Esther Jang: Sure. Anytime.

Harte Daniels: But I'm very, very, very excited about what you have done, and very proud of the progress you've made over the years, because I've seen the direct impact. Whether you have money or not, when the electricity goes, so does your cellphone, so does your connection to the internet . I think maybe you can ping off of the fact that California has had like four earthquakes in a day.

Esther Jang: Thank you. I will bounce off that. Really, what really what we want to do is create a community of process around that working, which can usually transcend a lot of aspects of economic status. They want to learn. They might want to transition careers. Most of our volunteers do come in generally wanting to help. Pretty much,

everyone wants to help. Often, for people like the Digital Stewards, they have the same motivation; they want to help, but they have to get paid in order to get paid in order to justify doing something, because of their family needs and whatnot. But, really, it does transcend a lot of those traditional boundaries, and also geographic boundaries. So, creating a unified community practice as much as possible. That was the social goal for me.

Harte Daniels: I'll try to find the information and we can have a conversation, but I do not wish to monopolize over others. Dorene's hand is up.

Dorene Cornwell: I have a more down-to-earth question. Have you worked with any multi-story, multi-family communities where the existing telecom infrastructure in the building might not be so great, and wireless has different pluses and minuses in different parts of the building? If you could say a little bit in general that, that would be very cool.

Esther Jang: Yes. I think that there are multiple issues within your question. So, multi-dwelling units with different types of wiring in them. I actually have not worked on multi-dwelling units, just because of Seattle not having all that many of them, comparatively. The ones I've worked in. For example, the Filipino Community Village has relatively new wiring, and then they have these built-in access points that can be used by multiple providers, but often the residents can't afford them, so that's why we've been providing them service. And the problem is that our cellular signals do not propagate well around the building. So, really the ones on the side of our cell power, those are the ones we can serve. And we've tried serving the back corner users, and they really don't get very good service. That is a reality, but luckily, for example in Catherine Place, which is another multi-dwelling unit, we were able to basically sign up a bunch of users who were directly facing the tower. So, those users, as far as I understand, when we were canvassing there during the pandemic, we found that most of those users did not have internet access at all, even though the capability was there, the infrastructure was there to buy service, they just couldn't afford it. Alice Lawson and I are collaborating right now on figuring out a plan for a certain grant that would maybe address more multi-dwelling units and circumstances like different types of wiring. So, we're trying to figure out different strategies to reuse that wiring, even collapsed and reused eventually with the right equipment. That is a challenge, but I don't think it is insurmountable, as long as in-building wiring is there. Maybe it's a little difficult, but I think that this is a large space of unsolved problems.

Dorene Cornwell: Got it. Well, thank you. This is actually enough to start. I would have been surprised if you said we have solved it all. But that's great. That's a great help. Thank you.

Harte Daniels: Esther, hospitals have the same issue of population and signals, because their structure is probably very similar to what Dorene Cornwell was talking about. On occasion, you won't get a signal around an MRI machine, either. But that's a different matter. But a lot of the structure is the same, so you could possibly reach out to people who (unintelligible) phone systems, etc., in a hospital situation. They probably will find some innovation. By the way, as an academic or whatnot, you would be able to do field experimentation and mash it up with others that are doing this exact same thing in emergent situations.

From Chat: Alice Lawson, Seattle IT

For those not familiar, Harte reference to Sandy = Hurricane Sandy and COW = Cell on Wheels (temp cell sites).

Esther Jang: One thing I will say is at hospitals, I have often seen distributive antenna systems. Basically, you have to install a lot of antennas in order to get really good coverage in any given situation because while those signals often propagate in a weird way and create dead zones, enterprise situations solve this by adding gear. When we are building a really tight budget grant, we can't just add all of the gear. I think that right now what I'm seeing is that these HotSpots are honestly a pretty good solution for digital equity, but not for emergency situations necessarily, because for emergencies, the cell networks will probably be overloaded. So, you might want to have an actual physical alternative. But in terms of people, individuals, especially those who are unhoused, HotSpots that they can actually hold in their hands -- the problem is the recurring costs. But, in terms of usability, that's probably the best solution, in my opinion, because they do provide that coverage.

Harte Daniels: We can talk later. Like I said, there are lessons that we have been learning from the catastrophe because yes, everybody lost and the hard wire companies and wireless weren't necessarily able to step up. Again, the military and others have to put in infrastructure and they don't do a lot of hard wired stuff when they're going into remote areas. So, later. I think you looked at some of these things, but I think there is still stuff that can be kicked up through the dust.

Esther Jang: I wanted to add real quick something I didn't mention. I'm sorry if we're running out of time. Just let me know if I need to stop. But on our network, one thing we did not have in 2021 when we got started with the cellular networks and E-SIMS. So, these days we are actually working on integrating E-SIMS into our network, where you can just take your phone and scan a QR code and load a SIM into your phone without having to use a physical SIM. Not all phones support this, and of course, it's only the newer ones, but some phones are E-SIM-only these days, and it's definitely the thing that phone networks are moving to. These are usually SIM cards that you have multiples of. So, you can have your physical SIM and an E-SIM or multiple E-SIMS that many phone just allow you to roam around with and use the coverage that is most favorable for different things like calling versus data, depending on service. For our network, which has patchy coverage, what we are trying to do with path flaps. We want people to have E-SIMs so that they can have E-SIM coverage when they are in service in our towers. So, that's pre-cellular data. When they're not in service range, then they would use whatever SIM they have by default. It's kind of like a super HotSpot. It expands the coverage that they would usually get way further than your typical WiFi HotSpot. That's what we're looking to do, partly with Seattle TMF funding that we got.

Alice Lawson: Dorene, I see your hand up, or was it up from before? If she doesn't have another question, I just wanted to comment. Esther is a current fellow with the Benton Institute for Broadband, so we have her excellent work here in Seattle, but she is doing it nationally, helping to spread the word about some of these innovations. So, that's wonderful. And then also, the work we are doing right now with a particular focus on the tiny home villages. One of the reasons that we, as a digital equity team think this is so important is we know that that is the most difficult population to actually get the access to. There are a lot of solutions and opportunities for low-cost programs that go to people in housed situation, but the tiny home villages and the tent cities are one of the sub-populations. We think that it is really profound that Esther and her group are finding solutions to help them get some connectivity. With that, does anybody have any last questions? Otherwise, I would stick to your agenda, Phillip. Otherwise, Esther, do you want to do one quick call-out? This is a terrific group to call out for volunteers for the work that you are doing. Because this is a community-driven solution, so people can show up and do installs, or do trainings and things like that. I know she is always looking at her seattlecommunitynetwork.org web site

Esther Jang: I can put the link in the chat. We organize on Discourse these days. we also are working on other integrations. Our mailing list exists, but it is not very active, and we're always telling people about our installs. People can just show up. We usually post an install plan ahead of time. If you like doing things like wiring up your house, or working on your car, you probably would be good to participate. And, even if you don't,

actually we need a lot more people to do literally any kind of organizing tasks. Currently, a lot of our people are tech people, and they just want to work on computers and electronics, but they don't want to say hey, we have a meeting now, or, hey, I'm announcing this event that we're holding or do tabling, community outreach, things like that. And of course, if you just want to teach people how to use a password manager, or little skills that people who use computers all of the time might have, but other people wouldn't. That would also be great, because honestly, we need more people who are people people, not just computer people. There are plenty of computer people in Seattle, but anyone who loves talking to people is very helpful.

Coleman Entringer: Esther, I have a lot of quick questions, as well. Sorry, my internet is cutting in and out, so forgive if you already answered something similar. But I was curious to know if you or any community-based organizations that you work with, what that partnership looks like?

Esther Jang: So, right now, one example is I am working on a grant application with the Filipino Community of Seattle and the task force, mainly. They are our direct operational team. An example of the partnership we have is that there are a bunch of people that I have formerly trained as digital stewards. They will hold their own trainings, so I have trained the trainer, and now they are the trainers and they train other people to do the installs. So, for these recent tiny house installs, I basically allocated some budget for labor, and I was able to pay them when they brought their team on-site, and they did their installs. So, they also hold Digital Navigator workshops. They hold literacy trainings, and as part of this new grant, the hope is that they would be allocated that funding to hold these trainings, and also to train the trainers, themselves. So, that is the relationship I have with them. the Filipino Community of Seattle also holds a broadband technician training program. There are a lot of Train the Trainer relationships going on, but also just operational partner relationships. The Filipino Community Center does a lot of installs themselves, and we are partnering to organize these internet installs for this grant that we are currently applying for. We first started working with the Filipino Community Center because they agreed to host on-site for us. So, we have that infrastructure, as well. Those are just some examples of who we work with and how. A lot of other partnerships are a much lighter touch, where they just host our site, or something like that.

Phillip Meng: Esther, is it possible to visit any of these sites?

Esther Jang: Yes, for sure. All of the cell sites you have to arrange in advance to make sure the facilities are open, where they can take you up on the roof, and things like that. A lot of them you can just see from the street. If you go to the Seattle Public Library, you can just look up and see it. And then, the tiny house villages sites, I think you would also probably want to arrange a visit, but those are probably the easiest to see, because they are on street level. Every time I drive past a south end village, I see our infrastructure. If you would like, I could just send you a list, or you can look at the site for those tiny house villages. You can probably just drive by and see it. Some of it is (unintelligible), like Nickelsville CD since we upgraded with new access points. They are lower down and are smaller, so they are harder to see.

Phillip Meng: Thank you. Got it. Any other questions, folks?

Esther Jang: You have given me a really great idea. Maybe we should give walking tours. Maybe that would be fun. It might raise awareness.

Phillip Meng: I think there might be some interest among this group in doing a site visit of some sort. If that opportunity comes up.

Esther Jang: Yes. That would be great.

Phillip Meng: Well, great! I think there is a lot of interest

Harte Daniels: (unintelligible) Because where you were going, I think you would generate a lot of interest beyond the techies in doing the walking tour. But the public -- I think you hit on something between you and Phillip Meng, there.

Phillip Meng: Harte, I absolutely agree. It raises awareness outside of these kinds of meetings for the general public. I think it would be great. I know there was some interest among our group in volunteering, in learning more about opportunities there. We really want to take the same model, too, so we can immediately follow up after our meetings. Can I get a quick show of hands as to who would be interested and continuing to

connect online and offline about volunteering, how we can support, and potentially a site visit. That opportunity comes up down the road.

From Chat: Esther Jang

seattlecommunitynetwork.org

From Chat: Femi Adebayo

Esther would love to volunteer

From Chat: Esther: train the trainer...

From Chat: Hailey Dickson

I'm a people people! Not techy enough for installs but I'm interested in supporting in organizing or outreach!

From Chat: Harte

There is a training professionals network which might be a place to look for volunteers

Introductions

From Chat: Meng: show of hands interested in volunteering...tasm Esther

From Chat: Esther

infrared@seattlecommunitynetwork.org

From Chat: Esther Jang: link me into email thread

Phillip Meng: Fantastic. Then, we'll to find an opportunity to -- because of the rules, we will start an email thread, but we will certainly keep this conversation going. Thank you so much again, Esther. This is a fantastic program, and we really appreciate the time sharing this information with us today.

Esther Jang: Would you be able to link me to an email thread with these folks?

Phillip Meng: Yes, we would. That will also come from the CTAB site. Thanks for sharing your email so that we can help. Okay! Now in our agenda, we promised a shorter meeting. On the subject of digital equity, I want to bring a vote to the board on joining the Digital Equity Learning Network (DELN). As you might know, we have had a historic relationship with this group. And what membership would mean is regular attendance with their meetings and engagement with CBO's within the organization. Folks, any questions about DELN or positions, before we go onto a vote?

DIGITAL EQUITY LEARNING NETWORK KING COUNTY (DELN) PARTICIPATION

Phillip Meng: In that case, Jon Morrison Winters, we would appreciate your feedback here, as well, to make sure that we get the process right. I will call for a motion on joining DELN.

Omari Stringer: I so move.

Phillip Meng: Do I have a second?

Coleman Entringer: Second.

Phillip Meng: All in favor?

Vinh Tang: Just a question. Are you trying to identify a CTAB member to be a part of those meetings for CTAB as a group, and would be required to attend those meetings, as well?

Phillip Meng: Yes. That's right. And that would be the discussion next.

Vinh Tang: Right.

Phillip Meng: Thanks, Vinh. Any opposed? Any abstentions? I think we have everyone. Then that brings us, as Vinh mentioned, to the next point. If there are no other volunteers, I am happy to attend the DELN meetings. But I want to get a sense from the group. If there is anyone willing to serve as our representative to the DELN of King County? For context, the meetings are bi-monthly general membership meetings on the third Thursday, roughly every two months or so.

Aishah Bomani: I don't know if you can see my hand. I'm already part of DELN and I attend the steering meetings, so I can be the liaison if everyone is okay with that. I can just report back here.

Phillip Meng: Aishah, that would be fantastic. And Hailey Dickson, there's no limit on the number of folks we can have attending the meetings. And I think it would be great to have multiple board members as possible. We can get in touch about that. Fantastic! Well, that being covered, let's go to our last agenda item of the evening, which is on our work plan for next year. Because a lot of folks have not had the opportunity yet to review it, I would like to take a larger part of our October to discuss a specific work plan and open a discussion on the status of our committees. As I understand it, there are a number of board members who are currently unaffiliated with a committee. I want to get a sense of two things: One, the degree of interest in joining an existing committee, for instance the Outreach Committee. I want to canvass some initial thoughts on restarting a committee that is focused on digital infrastructure, civic technology, and so forth. An earlier version of this committee was called the Smart Cities Committee. And over the last few weeks, Coleman Entringer and Amanda, who is in the audience today, have put together some interesting proposals on what this committee might look like. So, before we share a more formal proposal and discuss with the full board, I want to get a quick

show of hands on which members, community members, board members, would be interested in joining this new group? Thanks, Omari. Thanks, Isabel.

From Chat: Omari Stringer

I'd be interested in the digital infrastructure / civic technology

From Chat: Isabel Rodriguez (they/them)

I'd also be interested in joining

Phillip Meng: Thanks, Omari. Thanks, Isabel. This is great information to know. Femi Adebayo, I would also like to take this opportunity to do quick check on the Outreach Committee, what the membership looks like right now, and whether we also want to take this opportunity to encourage more folks to join the ranks.

From Chat: Femi Adebayo

no membership at the moment. looking forward to have more members

From Chat: Hailey Dickson

Where can I find a list of the subcommittees?

Harte Daniels: Femi mentioned in chat that he is having difficulty talking today, because

From Chat: Hailey Dickson

Where can I find a list of the subcommittees?

Phillip Meng: Oh, thank you, Harte. My apologies about that. Then, perhaps, can I also ask folks -- and again, I understand that there are a number of people not yet affiliated with a committee, whether there is any interest in joining the Outreach Committee. Can we get a quick show of hands. Okay. So, we will be wanting to build up our membership in the Outreach Committee first. Thank you, Femi, for the update in chat. Hailey Dickson, I will follow up offline with a list of committees. Right now our active interest in a committee around digital infrastructure and civic technology. Folks, does anyone want to offer any additional comments or suggestions, as we build this into a more clear proposal over the next month? **committees are Digital Equity and Outreach, And based on the level of outreach in the group, I think we will have some great**

Amanda Lai: Maybe I just might add a plug around the digital infrastructure and civic . I think the initial thinking around this was to really gauge Seattle resident sentiment on the development and deployment of the different digital services. So, free public WiFi, City applications, City data access. And to really gauge that sentiment predominantly through a survey that could be monitored quarterly. It would have two parts. That sentiment analysis on the deployment of existing digital technologies, but also Seattle residents' interest in incorporating emergent technologies into Seattle City services, as well. If folks are interested, that would be one key area that we would love to add to the committee proposal, which is more of a leadership aspect.

From Chat: Hailey Dickson

I need to drop to rejoin my work conference event, but looking forward to learning more and working with everyone this year! Will keep an eye out for the minutes to review the year's upcoming workplan.

Phillip Meng: Thanks, Amanda. And as we enhance the proposal, I want to give everyone a chance to weigh in and provide their suggestions for what the committee will do, while also taking some inspiration from successful initiatives.

Coleman Entringer: I just want to offer some words of support, because I know we'll get further comments on it, but I think the intersection of making sure that we have what the City of Seattle is providing in terms of digital services and infrastructure around that. I think it's really key and representative of what I think CTAB is all about. Even though I will be staying with the Digital Equity Committee, I am definitely excited about this, and I offer my full support.

From Chat: Harte Daniels

Would those wanting to revive the Smart Cities be able to find way of including non-techie residents

Phillip Meng: Thanks so much, Coleman. I totally second that, and honestly, I am so excited to see just the level of engagement and energy for creating something new. Harte Daniels, certainly from my perspective, I think this committee should be accessible and open as possible to the community. And I would love to get a sense of folks who are interested in joining. We would definitely want to advertise it as widely as possible. Great. Okay. Folks, in terms of next steps, we will advance the proposal based on the committee structure we are discussing here, as well as other priorities, work areas, and presentations We have heard from. In the next month we will first circulate offline the CTAB 2024 work plan template, and I would like to go into our October meeting with a clearer sense of what each board member is interested in. I will also take some time to schedule one on ones, especially with our newer board members, as we identify these areas. Harte Daniels is absolutely right. Outreach is not just about advertisements, it's about effective integrative strategy and to circulate something in the coming weeks.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Phillip Meng: I want to end with any old and new business, or comments from committees. I know the Digital Equity did not meet this last month. So, I open it to the floor, for anyone who would like to make any comments.

From Chat: Femi Adebayo

no membership at the moment. looking forward to have more members

DIGITAL EQUITY COMMITTEE

Coleman Entringer: I can provide a brief update. I know our meeting last month and a meeting prior to that that wasn't covered since CTAB was cancelled last month. I just wanted to provide a brief update on the current focus of DEI. We have moved into our planning focus for an upcoming telecom forum, tentatively scheduled for October or November. That is what we discussed at our previous meeting, and are currently in the process of doing outreach for our partner companies, telecom providers, as well as partners or CBOs for the event . so, more to come.

Phillip Meng: Thank you so much, Coleman. Very exciting. Harte?

Harte Daniels: My apologies to both the board here, and to DEI, but illness has kept me away from either volunteering or attending the meetings. Sometimes I couldn't get into a meeting if I ran late. We are now approaching fall, and I believe Meira Jough told me that this is when they would start outreaching for the Technology Matching Fund. I have some questions, and would like to see some improvements on the TMF grant application, primarily that we have been steadily asking the CBOs that are applying to collaborate more. I would like to point system to include exactly how you are going to be collaborating, and do outreach to those CBOs that have applied and applied, but for lack of skill have not been able to write a successful grant. I would have some volunteers, and choose some of the smaller ones, not the larger well-funded nonprofits. As a matter of fact, she mentioned the Filipino Community Center, and I am wondering whether we can assist, and to hear tonight how much they have done for the community. They have not been successful in writing and I would like to see volunteers to assist them. But, just as a reminder, the TMF is coming up, and if anybody is interested in assisting with that, let's put that on the table. That's something that a lot of members on the DEI Committee would do, and that's coming in the next month.

Phillip Meng: Thanks for keeping the TMF on our radar. I want to thank everyone for being here. It has been a very productive. A lot of great follow-up, and two great presentations where I know that this group will want to engage more. If nothing else, thanks so much. Have a great rest of your evening, and I look forward to seeing everyone in October.

ADJOURNMENT

