

CHARLOTTE CITY COUNCIL 600 East Fourth Street

Charlotte, NC 28202

704/336-6105

[justin.harlow@charlottenc.gov](mailto:justin.harlow@charlottenc.gov)

www.charlottenc.gov

![A person wearing a suit and tie

Description generated with very high confidence]()

***Justin Harlow***

***City Council Member***

***District 2***

August 31, 2018

Federal Communications Commission

445 12th Street, SW

Washington, DC 20554

**RE: Accelerating Wireless Broadband Deployment by Removing Barriers to Infrastructure Investment (WT Docket No. 17-79)**

Dear FCC Commissioners,

I am deeply encouraged by the potential social and economic benefits that await with the spread of 5G. Many of these benefits will stem from the advent of revolutionary technologies that only a speedy and powerful 5G wireless network can support. Smart city infrastructure – which will come to support the operation of autonomous vehicles, efficient street lighting, and more – will be able to introduce some much-needed efficiency into our daily lives. While that may be convenient, these smart city apps will also go a long way in reducing energy consumption. In other words, there is far more to gain from 5G than just near-instantaneous download speeds.

North Carolina’s vibrant technology sector will play a major role in shaping the innovations that come to benefit American communities in the 5G era. But if these cutting-edge technologies are truly going to benefit all localities, we will have to work to remove some hurdles to 5G’s widespread deployment. Charlotte is lucky to be getting 5G soon, but how long will it take for the rest of the state to experience 5G? What about the country?

Regulations developed for traditional cell towers impose overly burdensome processes on the placement of small cells – the technology that will largely be responsible for America’s 5G network. These outdated rules will create unnecessary delays in rolling out 5G.

The FCC has the ability to remove barriers to wireless infrastructure investment. I urge you to examine these regulatory deficiencies with the goal of developing a national standard that streamlines the infrastructure deployment process. The longer we allow outdated regulations to persist, the further behind the United States will fall in the race to 5G – which bodes poorly for our country’s economic competitiveness.

I am appreciative of the FCC’s attentiveness to date in preparing our country for the deployment of 5G. I hope that you will advance this agenda by streamlining regulations that remain challenging for digital infrastructure investment. With your help, we can ensure the development of a robust 5G network for all citizens.

Sincerely,

Justin Harlow

Charlotte City Councilmember

Enclosure: Op-ed

<http://www.thecharlottepost.com/news/2018/08/10/opinion/let-s-welcome-the-5g-revolution-to-charlotte-metro-area/>

**Let’s Welcome 5G to Charlotte**

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is coming, and Charlotte is prime to be a part of this with the new 5G economy.

Since the early part of the 18th Century there have been three industrial eras, with the last being the digital revolution that started in the 1980s. We are on the brink of the next seismic technological change, one that will be supported by next-generation, 5G wireless. Not just an improved version of the existing generation of wireless, super powerful 5G will make possible smart city applications, virtual reality-based job training, fully functional autonomous vehicles, and many other advancements that will change the way we live.

North Carolina and Charlotte are no strangers to technology. Our tech industry added more than 10,000 jobs last year and generated about $40 billion in statewide economic activity. Over 330,000 North Carolinians make their livings in [tech](https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/north-carolina-technology-industry-added-more-than-10000-jobs-in-2017-tech-contributes-nearly-40-billion-in-economic-impact-to-state-300620364.html). To maintain that vibrant economic sector we have to make sure everyone – not just people living in Charlotte or big cities – have access to 5G. That’s why it is so important that we not allow support 5G development in Charlotte but in our smaller towns in Mecklenburg.

One of the major issues right now is the outdated system that controls the permitting of wireless infrastructure. Rules written to govern massive cell towers don’t fit the needs of 5G small cell antennas. Small cells, which can fit into a pizza box, will be mounted on existing structures like light poles or the sides of buildings. Wireless providers need to place thousands of them to support 5G, and making them jump through time-consuming, red tape-laden, expensive permitting processes that from one area to the next is not efficient.

The impact is especially hard on small communities. Providers don’t have unlimited resources and making them needlessly spend more dealing with excessive fees and regulations to cover cities puts small towns farther down the priority list. Actually, the expanded services and employment opportunities it offers in many ways may be even more important to our city.

The FCC is taking steps to streamline and standardize the permitting process, and many states and cities are doing the same. There has been some pushback at local levels over fears that communities could lose zoning control and fee revenues, but those fears are unfounded. There are plenty of good rules being written that protect community rights and revenues while still speeding 5G deployment.

Federal leadership on wireless infrastructure permitting is important and we are getting that from the FCC. While the FCC should and is planning to do more, we also need to make sure local governments follow that leadership and implement smart policies that don’t stand in the way of progress. This has to be a team effort. Creating a hospitable, investment-encouraging environment for wireless deployment in one community not only does their town good, but also benefits the next town down the line as they work to bring state-of-the-art networks to their families, schools and businesses too.

5G is going to be a great thing, for Charlotte. Make no mistake, this is a competition that our foreign competitors would love to win. Whoever gets 5G first is going to have a huge advantage in business, security, healthcare, and many other important arenas. Let’s welcome this new technology revolution to our city.

Office of the City Council 600 East Fourth Street Charlotte, NC 28202-2843 704/336-2241