

**COUNCIL POLICY**

SUBJECT: CITY USE OF CABLE TELEVISION

POLICY NO.: 700-37

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 20, 1977

**BACKGROUND:**

Local cable television franchises must, in accordance with Federal Communications Commission rules, make available without charge at least one “specially designated channel for local government uses” and at least one “specially designated channel for local public uses.” The Access Channel requirement offers the City and the public the opportunity to employ the most recent innovations in cable television technology in an effort to provide more efficient and more effective government and community service to the public. Although the channels are to be provided by the cable franchise without cost, government, agencies, and the public using the channels are required to pay all program production costs on the Government Access Channel. The franchises will cooperate with other interested bodies in off-setting costs on the Public Access Channel (as provided for in F.C.C. regulations).

**PURPOSE:**

1. To provide an orderly procedure by which the Council, management and staff will be able to select potential program ideas, prioritize scheduling, and produce programs in the public interest suitable for transmission on local cable television systems.
2. To insure that members of the public will be able to submit suggested program ideas, and to provide for a review of the administration of the use of the Government Access Channel by a committee representing the offices of the Mayor, the City Council and the City Manager and including citizens with experience and/or interest in the subject.
3. To establish guidelines for the funding and disbursement of funds for City cable television program production.

**POLICY:****A. General Policy**

1. The Government Access Channel shall be used for the presentation of program material relating to the local government matters and may also be used for the presentation of material relating to community services with the approval of the City Manager or the committee provided for in this policy (Section B.5. (b)).
2. The Government Access Channel shall not normally be used for the telecasting of programs whose major issue is one which is controversial and which has not been decided by the City Council or the voters.
  - a. The Government Access Channel shall not be used for the promotion of any political candidacy or for the promotion of any ballot measure.

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- b. To insure balanced presentation of any controversial program subjects, all such program proposals shall be submitted to the committee established under Section B.5.(b) of this Policy.
  - c. The Committee shall not finalize the program script or outline until it shall have afforded an opportunity to all Council members and other interested officials and organizations to submit suggestions for the purpose of assuring that all sides of the controversial issue are fairly and accurately represented.
  - d. Notwithstanding the above, this policy shall not be construed to discourage the use of the Government Access Channel for the telecasting, either in whole or in edited version, of any meeting of the City Council or its committees or other City boards, commissions or committees, when the subject under consideration is of interest to the public in the City of San Diego, irrespective of the fact that the subject(s) under consideration may be controversial.
3. Government access programming shall be directed toward effective delivery of government services and information. Specifically, programming should:
    - a. augment or improve delivery to the public of either (i) existing local government and community services or (ii) information describing such services; or
    - b. facilitate introduction to the public of new local government or community services and information; or
    - c. provide background information and alternative courses of action concerning policy issues of importance to the community.
  4. The City will coordinate program scheduling and production efforts with similar programming efforts made by other local franchising authorities, provided all such programming conforms to the guidelines described herein under Section A., paragraphs 1, 2 and 3.
  5. The City Council finds that public access television is of significant value to the community, and it shall be the policy of the City Council that the Council and the City staff shall make every reasonable effort to insure for the continued provision of public access channels. This policy may be exercised in dealing with franchises and with other regulatory agencies.

**B. Operating Policy**

1. The City Manager shall develop a procedure, subject to review by Council and the committee established under Section B.5. (b), for the coordination and prioritization of recommendations for production of scheduled programming. At the discretion of the committee, outside consultants and local community professionals may be requested to assist with the procedure.
2. In order to coordinate programming recommendations, the City Manager shall approve the programming recommendations for both Managerial and Non-Managerial Departments;

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insuring that such approval is in conformance with the guidelines described under Section A (General Policy), and subject to review by the committee established under Section B.5. (b).

3. Priority for each approved program shall be determined after consideration of each of the following factors:
  - a. estimated production costs and available program production resources within the City and including the community;
  - b. degree of interest from Council, organizations and the public, as demonstration of an assessment of need for the program;
  - c. timeliness, when it is appropriate to consider it as a factor;
  - d. the value of the program in meeting program objectives of the City.
4. Production costs of the government access programming will be paid from the balance of funds generated by the cable television franchise fees after sufficient funds have been allocated for payment of all cable franchise administrative and regulatory costs and other related costs which have been approved by the Council.
5.
  - a. Seventy-five percent of the funds available for production shall be allocated to production of regularly scheduled programming. A schedule of regular programming shall be included in the annual budget proposal submitted to Council by the Citizens Assistance and Information Department.
  - b. The remaining twenty-five percent of the available production funds shall be included in the Citizens Assistance and Information Department budget as “unscheduled program funds” and shall be allocated at the discretion of a committee consisting of representatives of the City Manager’s Office, Mayor’s Office, City Council Office, and an equal number of individuals from the community at large (unless the above are appointed from the community). The Council’s appointments shall be made by resolution of the Council. Further responsibilities of the committee are stated throughout this Policy and in Administrative Regulation referencing this Policy.

**HISTORY:**

Adopted by Resolution R-218886 07/20/1977