

Policy Briefing Summary

City Council



Regarding:	Ordinance to renew Franchise Agreement for FiberLight, LLC
Staff Contact(s):	Steven Hicks, Director of Public Works
Presenter:	Steven Hicks, Director of Public Works
Date of Proposed Action:	October 19, 2026

Issue

FiberLight, LLC ("FiberLight"), has requested a renewal of their expired Franchise Agreement ("FA") with the City of Charlottesville, Virginia ("City"). This renewal will allow FiberLight to perform work on facilities located within the City's Public Right-of-Way ("PROW"). The attached FA contains the recently updated obstruction language that outlines a more robust enforcement mechanism in line with ADA compliance and pedestrian safety throughout the City.

Background / Rule

This is a renewal of the previous FA that expired in 2022. To protect the integrity and safety of its streets and PROWs, the City establishes FA with telecommunication providers under Article VII §9 of the Virginia Constitution. These FAs grant limited rights to install and maintain facilities within the PROW, while ensuring the City retains authority to regulate the use of public space.

Analysis

The FiberLight FA incorporates amended Section 206 provisions, which improve the City's ability to manage and enforce compliance in the in the PROW. Specifically, the FA:

- Prohibits obstruction of the PROW, unless explicitly authorized in an approved plan;
- Requires removal of any obstruction within forty-five (45) days after City notification;
- Establishes daily penalties (\$500/day) for failure to remove unauthorized facilities after the deadline; and
- Authorizes the City to remove the obstruction and recover reasonable costs when the company fails to act.

These provisions directly support the City's ADA Transition Plan and reinforce its legal obligation to maintain accessible pedestrian routes. The strengthened language also provides a clear, enforceable framework to address delayed pole transfers and other obstructions in the PROW.

This action aligns with City Council's vision of Organizational Excellence by ensuring consistent, accountable management of the PROW through updated franchise standards. The attached FA strengthens coordination with utility providers, improves operational efficiency, and enhances the City's ability to maintain safe, accessible, and well-managed infrastructure for the community.

Financial Impact

There is no budgetary impact except for the prescribed measures granted by this FA for the City to recover costs as appropriate for use of the PROW.

Recommendation

City staff recommends that City Council adopt the attached Ordinance granting a FA to FiberLight consistent with the City's updated FA framework. Approval will:

- Maintain continuity of telecommunications services within the City;
- Ensure FiberLight complies with updated PROW management and enforcement standards; and
- Support the City's broader initiative to eliminate double poles, achieve ADA compliance, and preserve the integrity of public infrastructure.

Recommended Motion (if Applicable)

"I make a Motion to approve the first reading of the attached Ordinance granting a FA to FiberLight and to schedule the attached Ordinance for second reading and possible adoption at City Council's next meeting."

Attachments

1. FIBERLIGHT LLC FA - 2026_