



# NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.  
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
September 5, 2012

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## **STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER AJIT PAI ON HIS VISIT TO KANSAS CITY'S GOOGLE FIBER PROJECT**

The United States needs a 21<sup>st</sup> century communications infrastructure—one that can support our transition to all-Internet Protocol (IP) networks. Google's investment in high-speed IP infrastructure in Kansas City, better known as Google Fiber, highlights the benefits of making that transition. This project will boost the economy of the Kansas City metropolitan area and will benefit consumers in a variety of ways. I am witnessing one such example today at the University of Kansas Medical Center, where Google's new network will expand the use of telemedicine and telehealth.

I came to the Google Fiber project in Kansas City because I wanted to see firsthand what Google has accomplished in Kansas City, how the company did it, and whether lessons from Kansas City can be applied more broadly.

The most important lesson I have learned thus far is this: It is critically important that states and local communities adopt broadband-friendly policies when it comes to rights-of-way management. When broadband service providers seek to construct next-generation networks, they need to access government-controlled land, poles, and conduits in order to lay fiber and install other infrastructure. Currently, too many providers who try to obtain such access are confronted with daunting sets of federal, state, and/or municipal regulations that often delay and sometimes deter infrastructure investment and broadband deployment.

This wasn't the case in Kansas City. Instead, local governments made a significant up-front commitment to expedite and simplify the permitting process. Indeed, this was one of the main reasons that Google selected Kansas City out of the more than 1,100 communities that applied. I encourage municipalities across the nation to study Kansas City's example and to see if they can streamline their own rights-of-way management policies. In addition, the Federal Communications Commission should work with stakeholders to develop model regulations, guidelines, or best practices for rights-of-way management that facilitate fiber deployment while safeguarding legitimate government interests. In the end, consumers will benefit from a more proactive, forward-thinking approach to these matters.

More generally, to enable the nationwide deployment of next-generation networks like Google Fiber, we need to eliminate regulatory barriers to innovation and investment at *all* levels of government. Whether we are dealing with economic regulation or rights-of-way management, we cannot apply 20<sup>th</sup> century approaches to our 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges.

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