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For Immediate Release

**FCC TO VOTE ON DESIGNATING BOSTON AND RALEIGH AS
NEWEST FCC INNOVATION ZONES**

***Boston and Raleigh Would Join New York City and Salt Lake City as Innovation
and Research Test Beds for Advanced Wireless Technologies Like 5G and Open
RAN***

WASHINGTON, July 14, 2021—FCC Acting Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel today proposed establishing Raleigh, North Carolina and Boston, Massachusetts as innovation zones to allow for advanced wireless communications and network innovation and research. These designations would, among other positive impacts, help spur the development and integration of 5G network technologies and open radio access networks, or Open RAN.

Innovation zones are FCC-designated, city-scale test beds managed by the National Science Foundation’s Platforms for Advanced Wireless Research. If approved by a vote of the full Commission at its August 5 Open Meeting, this proposal will allow Raleigh and Boston to join New York City and Salt Lake City at the forefront of wireless technology innovation.

“These Innovation Zones will support cutting-edge research and development that is crucial for advancing our wireless leadership,” said Rosenworcel. “Moreover, by bringing together operators, vendors, vertical interests, and other government agencies, we are helping to spur a market for more secure and open 5G technologies. I am grateful to city and research facility leaders, and our partners at the National Science Foundation, for working with us to deliver these opportunities.”

The Innovation Zones initiative was first proposed by NSF’s Platforms for Advanced Wireless Research and, in September 2019, the FCC [designated](#) New York City and Salt Lake City as the first designated zones. These wireless technology test beds extend the geographic areas in which already licensed experimental program licensees can conduct tests. Parties have flexibility to conduct multiple non-related experiments in the zone, and the designation allows experimental program license holders, which are licensed to operate elsewhere, to also use the Innovation Zones.

In keeping with the FCC’s effort to explore the potential of Open RAN technology, each test bed is equipped for Open RAN research and testing. The FCC is in the process of taking public comment on the current status of Open RAN development and deployment, whether and how the FCC might foster its success, and how to support competitiveness and new entrant access to this emerging market. The Acting Chairwoman made the [announcement](#) of her proposed designations at today’s FCC-hosted Open RAN Solutions Showcase.

The **Boston Innovation Zone**, at Northeastern University, will support the transition of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency’s (DARPA) Colosseum network emulator to a

shared platform, usable by the research community. Colosseum, the world's largest wireless network emulator, was originally designed to support DARPA's Spectrum Collaboration Challenge. With the conclusion of that challenge, the larger research community will now be able to take advantage of Colosseum's unique capabilities, including the ability to emulate full-stack communications, to support artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms and hardware in the loop. This project is expected to bring academia, government, and industry researchers together to accelerate advancements in wireless networked systems and Open RAN.

The **Raleigh Innovation Zone**, in collaboration with North Carolina State University, will house Aerial Experimentation and Research Platform for Advanced Wireless (AERPAW), which will focus on new use cases involving wireless communications and unmanned aerial systems. AERPAW will focus on how cellular networks and advanced wireless technologies can enable beyond visual line-of-sight unmanned aerial systems to accelerate development, verification, and testing of transformative advances and breakthroughs in telecommunications, transportation, infrastructure monitoring, agriculture, and public safety. The AERPAW testbed will be the first platform to allow testing at scale of open 5G-and-beyond solutions in unmanned aerial system verticals.

The proposed Public Notice to be shared by Acting Chairwoman Rosenworcel today with her fellow Commissioners would also, if adopted, modify the New York City Innovation Zone (known as COSMOS) to cover the three Columbia University and City College of New York campus areas. COSMOS is a city-scale outdoor testbed with a technical focus on ultra-high-bandwidth and low-latency wireless communications, with tightly coupled edge computing, a type of cloud computing enabling data processing at the edge of the network. COSMOS also was a host facility for the 2019 and 2020 O-RAN Alliance worldwide plugfests.

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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).