

Bob Proctor's Presentation to Carrboro Aldermen
May 17, 2016

The aggressive Google Fiber roll-out shares traits with the Über Ride Sharing and Air B&B Room Sharing services:

These well-funded Silicon Valley projects go into localities without regard for existing procedures, writing their own rules.

But it makes sense that governments have been playing catch-up drafting rules for Über and Air B&B, since these services are new in nature.

When I talked about Google Fiber with my brother, who has had a telecom career, he said, "I don't understand why Google Fiber is such a big deal ... for practical purposes, their service will be the same as AT&T's fiber service".

But to me, Google Fiber is more similar to Über and Air B&B than it is to AT&T: Yet again, we have a rich Silicon Valley company that's expecting localities to rewrite their rules because Google is somehow "Special".

AT&T has been getting sites by working with localities in standard ways, whereas Google seduces towns into granting it a commercial advantage by amending zoning laws and leasing it parks and green spaces.

Now a top goal for me is to get Google to reform its fiber roll-out:

Hopefully the national Sierra Club will press Google to adopt two reforms – First, to pledge to not use parks or urban green spaces for their facilities, and Second, to broaden the kinds of tracts than can be nominated as sites to include tracts owned by school districts, utilities, and counties.

This Board often passes resolutions supporting national social justice causes.

When attorneys prepared to approach the Supreme Court to get gay marriage legalized, they chose the best possible couples to be plaintiffs.

There will never be a stronger model case than in Carrboro to illustrate how Google's pressure on towns to rush their siting and permitting processes, in a fashion that skirts standard practices, can produce a site choice that is not in a community's best interests.

Tonight I am asking you to forget about the details of the lease and the permit, and to please step back and to take a look at the big picture.

Soon somewhere in the nation there will be an oily school bus maintenance yard that could serve as an ideal site for a Google facility.

But Google won't even know about it, because it is owned by a school district.

Instead, Google will end up pilfering a piece of a city park on the poor side of town for a commercial light industrial facility.

Therefore I invite you tonight to pass a mild resolution that will encourage Google to make these two revisions to their future siting requirements ... please see the blue sheet of paper.