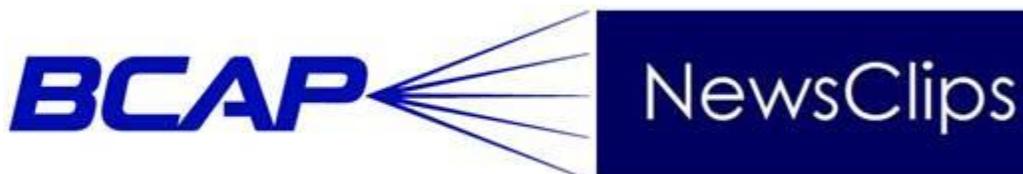


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Carlisle Sentinel

Verizon Communications Inc. has chosen Samsung Electronics Co. as a major supplier in the telecom giant's push to offer high speed internet over its wireless network, as the first commercial launches of fifth-generation offerings take shape.

Verizon's 5G network will launch in the second half of this year in Sacramento, Calif., before adding the service in other U.S. markets. It will use cellular antennas to beam high-speed internet into consumers' homes. Samsung will make network equipment for Verizon—including the small boxes that will sit inside each home, receiving the signal and translating it into Wi-Fi—the companies said Wednesday.

Financial terms of the arrangement weren't disclosed.

Telecom giant Verizon last year began 5G trials, focused on its home broadband service and free to consumers, in 11 U.S. markets from New Jersey to California. Samsung will provide network gear for Verizon's launch in Sacramento, where customers will be offered the option of purchasing the faster service. Companies globally are [investing billions of dollars in 5G](#) despite continued debate over its ultimate uses beyond faster download speeds.

Government agencies and telecom operators expect broad 5G availability in many markets by 2020, and with it the potential for broader adoption of self driving cars, smart cities and internet connected robots. "5G is a reality," said Kim Young-ky, president of Samsung's networks business, in an interview. The home internet offering is an early step in the industry's transition to 5G technology, which will be significantly faster and respond more quickly to user commands than existing 4G networks.

To Verizon, it carries the potential to disrupt an industry currently dominated by cable providers like Comcast Corp. and Charter Communications Inc. Verizon said last month it would also be supplied by Ericsson AB, another 5G network equipment maker, for commercial launches in other U.S. markets. South Korean technology giant Samsung, a small player in the network equipment world, believes its knowledge making products and components could give it an edge with telecom customers seeking to sell connectivity to a wider range of devices.

Samsung's network business generated some 2 trillion (\$1.9 billion) to 2.5 trillion won in 2017, according to research firm Counterpoint Technology Market Research. It targets annual revenue of 10 trillion won by 2022, a Samsung spokesman said. AT&T Inc. last month said it would [launch a 5G trial](#)

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site in Texas, after tests in other markets. Sprint Corp. and T-Mobile US Inc. have said they are working on nationwide 5G networks, targeting late 2019 or 2020.

The average U.S. consumer uses about five gigabytes of mobile data a month, Mr. Kim said. But after 5G becomes more ubiquitous in the next few years, he believes consumers will eventually use closer to 100 gigabytes monthly on new services such as virtual or augmented reality programs—or even from driverless cars that will require greater data speeds to rapidly process traffic conditions. About two years ago, Samsung combined about 1,000 workers from different divisions including handsets, network and its central research-and-development group, to create a “Next Generation Communications Business” team dedicated to 5G. “With 5G, it’s going to be expanding beyond your phone,” Kim Woo-june, a senior vice president in Samsung’s network business, said in an interview. The industry’s first mobile phones with 5G capabilities aren’t likely to debut until 2019, he added. – *Wall Street Journal*

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At the core of the net neutrality repeal is the idea that broadband competition will give consumers more options. In other words, if one internet service provider starts blocking your favorite sites or slowing down your video stream, or if your provider is too slow or too expensive or too unreliable, you should be able to take your business elsewhere. The city can do more to encourage competition between broadband internet providers.

But healthy broadband competition does not exist today. For speeds above 15 mbps, or megabits per second, more than 64 percent of Houston has two

or fewer broadband options at home. And while cell providers promise broadband-like speeds with their upcoming 5G networks, there are enormous barriers to entry that prevent startups and industry disruptors from entering the field. And in Texas, cities are prohibited from creating a municipal-owned broadband network.

So, what can Mayor Sylvester Turner and City Council do to encourage broadband competition? Right away, they can begin collecting data about broadband availability, speed and price across the city. This data collection activity could even be part of regularly scheduled community meetings, captured via notecards and pencils. The city could also coordinate citizen-reported speed

tests from various neighborhoods throughout the city. As we get ready for Census 2020, which will be mostly online, the connectivity and digital literacy of all Houstonians becomes a top priority if we are to procure as accurate a representation as possible for funding for the region.

The city can encourage citizen-led solutions. In New York City, NYC Mesh is a neutral community network that provides access through a series of rooftop nodes and supernodes. It delivers internet service wirelessly and connects to a fiber backbone in key places. Houston officials should be actively exploring ideas such as this with academic partners and local makerspaces.

The city can also improve transparency about master license agreements for wireless facilities. These agreements provide the terms under which private companies may use the city's utility poles and other access nodes for their network. Even after the state Legislature set new, lower fees for using the public right of way, the city can still collect \$250 or more per access node, per year. The mayor and City Council should require that the two departments collecting these fees - Administrative and Regulatory Affairs, and Public Works and Engineering - plan and report how they will incorporate broadband equity projects into their departmental plans.

In the future, with data in hand, the city can make broadband accessibility and affordability part of Houston's legislative agenda. City officials should seek amendments to SB 1004 that would create opportunities for broadband accessibility and affordability for all Houstonians. For example, the law could be amended to make exemptions for and prioritize the ISPs of nonprofit organizations, community-owned networks and broadband providers in underserved areas. Mayor Turner and the members of City Council can't change the FCC, but they can encourage bold new ideas that would make meaningful progress toward affordable, high-speed internet access for Houstonians in every neighborhood. – *Houston Chronicle*

Google decided to block YouTube from working on Amazon Fire devices four days earlier than the company originally promised. In **early December** Google blocked YouTube from working on Amazon Echo Show devices, and stated that it would be similarly blocking YouTube from working on Amazon Fire devices starting on the first of the year. The annoying effort was the latest in the long-standing feud between the companies, which escalated when Amazon **blocked Chromecast and Apple TV devices** from being sold in the Amazon marketplace.

Despite the fact that Amazon announced that it would be **returning those devices to shelves**, Google appears to have banned YouTube from working on Fire devices December 28 -- four days earlier than originally stated. Google is refusing to comment on the latest move, which takes functionality away from consumers that have paid already paid for hardware. The company claimed just **two weeks ago** that the two sides were engaged in "productive talks" to keep the ban from taking place, but those talks clearly have gone nowhere. "We've been trying to reach agreement with Amazon to give consumers access to each other's products and services," Google said in a statement back in early December.

"But Amazon doesn't carry Google products like Chromecast and Google Home, doesn't make Prime Video available for Google Cast users, and last month stopped selling some of Nest's latest products," Google added. "Given this lack of reciprocity, we are no longer supporting YouTube on Echo Show and FireTV. We hope we can reach an agreement to resolve these issues soon." "YouTube and millions of other websites are accessible by using a web browser like Firefox or Silk on Fire TV," is all Amazon would say of the standoff.

Reports indicate that Amazon has been **considering its own YouTube competitor**, though gaining the same market traction as YouTube is a notable uphill climb. Again, users can bypass this latest blockade by simply loading YouTube in a web browser on the impacted devices, though the entire fracas still remains both counter-productive and anti-consumer. – *DSL Reports*



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