PROMISED LAND OF DIGITAL FREEDOM

A Plan to Relaunch Community Media Access in Atlanta

Submitted To:

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I. Executive Summary

a. Overview

The community access media program is mandated under the cable franchise agreement with Comcast Corporation. Part of the cable television franchise fees and a portion of subscriber fees help pay for the program. Public Access Television, referred to throughout this document as "community media," is at a pivotal moment in its history, nationally and locally, to redefine its role in community-oriented telecasting by embracing digital transformation and community engagement. Since 1986, community access had been operated by a nonprofit media organization named, People TV. The city ended the contract with People TV in 2023. This report consists of 10 recommendations, including recommendations on budget.

It is broken into seven sections including a detailed appendices with subcommittee recommendations and budget recommendations. Each section is subdivided. The objectives of this report are to position the city to reopen the public access channel by January 6, 2025; open makerspace by February 1, 2025; transition the community media program to a permanent operator by July 1, 2025; and allow the city to approve a budget allocation for community media access by next fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2025.

b. Methodology & Observations

The Blue Ribbon Committee met regularly from July 24, 2024, until December 12, 2024. The committee and several subcommittees focused on: operations, technology, youth engagement, community outreach, and budgeting. Nearly all meetings were open to the public and several of the subcommittees afforded opportunities for community input. In addition, the BRC held community engagement forums at the C.T. Martin Recreation Center and Friendship Baptist Church along with two briefings with the city's Utilities Committee and a meeting with the Atlanta Planning and Advisory Board. The Committee also carefully reviewed the recommendations of prior consultants, especially those from The Buske Group, and incorporated some of their recommendations as appropriate. Going forward, the BRC recommend that the city become a more active partner of the community media program. This entails providing greater funding, supporting the vendor/operator in seeking private and corporate funding, providing technical assistance upon request, and most importantly, providing strong oversight.

The city should make community media a part of selected city initiatives on: youth, the environment and climate, workforce and education, and the arts. By connecting community media to all major initiatives occurring in the city, the channel and program will become a virtual community, providing connectivity and neighborhood identity. For this to occur, both the city and the vendor operating community media will need to better engage with the public, particularly youth and school-aged residents.

We also emphasize the importance of strong leadership. When donors contribute to programs, they are, in essence, investing in the program's leadership. We believe if the city adopts and implements these recommendations, including those concerning the importance of leadership and partnership, it will be able to avoid pitfalls of the past and be better positioned to embrace future opportunities.

Finally, this report does not attempt to untangle the web of confusion around the historic funding of public access. To review audited financial reports and policy changes throughout the 44 years of community access history in this city is beyond the scope of this report. What this report does do is to propose funding, prospectively, that we believe will allow for the operations and maintenance of a quality community media program that public officials desire and residents deserve.

c. Recommendations

The Blue Ribbon Committee Recommends that**:**

1. Transition Committee (TC) be Created

We recommend that the City forms a transition committee comprised of seven members. The TC and its staff would ensure that the channel is operational by January 6, 2025, and that the makerspace comes online by February 1, 2025. Additionally, the TC would:

- Manage the public access staff, operations, channel, and facilities until a permanent vendor is in place. The new operator/vendor is anticipated to begin on or before July 1, 2025.
- Screen applications and recommend staff to be hired (on a temporary basis) to operate community media program, train the public in television and media production, assist in the playback of the cable channel and live streams, and to maintain equipment and facilities.
- Develop rules and policies for the ongoing operation of community media taking in consideration the historic rules of access operations and best practices.
- Negotiate terms of an agreement with a new operating vendor (referred to as the "Vendor").
- Work with the City on legislation necessary to effect the transfer of the obligation for operating access to the new vendor.

2. The City Creates a Community Media Advisory Board

The city shall reconstitute the now defunct Cable Television Advisory Board or create a new Community Media Advisory Board (CMAB) with oversight authority over community access operations, equipment, programming and facilities. The board might consist of seven residents and should stay abreast of the trends and developments in PEG programming and operations; receive and investigate complaints from the public, particularly those that allege wrongful denial of access to any community media programs, equipment or facilities; hold an annual public hearing on behalf of the City; and present to the Mayor and City Council an annual report on PEG in Atlanta.

3. The City Provides Space for a Community Media "Hub"

The BRC has identified space at 2 Peachtree Street. We recommend that this space be provided rent-free for no less that 12 months. In addition, we recommend that the city collaborates with the vendor/operator of community media to establish three satellite locations in city recreation/community centers where space is available. The satellite "mini-hubs" will serve as makerspaces for media creators, centers for media production training, and locations where residents can upload video/audio files for playout on the community media channel and platforms.

4. The City Provides Technical Assistance (TA)

Such assistance could include:

- Playout of the community access channel
- Design of production facilities
- Recommendations on equipment purchases
- Potential partnership with other city departments and offices

5. The Vendor (administering the program) Provides Nondiscriminatory Access

The city should require that the vendor provides access to equipment, facilities, and channel time on a first-come, first-serve, nondiscriminatory basis, except to accommodate/promote programming with specific underrepresented groups. The BRC strongly recommends that city requires the traditions of community media and the history of civil rights and equality be bedrock principles upon which the program is built.

6. A Higher Education Consortium to Manage Community Media be Formed

The City's Transition Committee should negotiate with higher education institutions in the area for the purpose of encouraging them to form a consortium to manage the city's community media program. This higher education consortium will have **one lead institution** along with representatives from other area colleges. Several higher education institutions participated on the BRC and have expressed an interest in possibly being the lead institution.

For the purpose of selecting a lead institution, it is our recommendation that the city issue an **RFQ** and qualify the best institutions it deems capable of leading this effort. Once the city has

reviewed qualifications, it should establish a list of ranked finalists. Beginning with the top finalist, the city should enter into negotiations. If negotiations are not successful with the top ranked finalist, then the city should commence negotiation with the second ranked institution, and so on and so forth until a successful agreement is reached. The criteria, among other considerations, should include:

- Experience of management team and expertise of key staff
- Demonstrated experience operating a community or public media entity and familiarity with community media history and philosophy
- Capability to manage human resources and payroll functions
- Capability to manage a media training program and media production facilities
- Demonstrated expertise in community outreach and engagement, including to youth, minorities, and makers/artists
- Successful record in fundraising
- Projection of grants and in-kind contributions the vendor will provide on an annual basis
- Expertise in establishing partnerships with private, public and governmental organizations
- Record of success in managing diversity and working with small, local, female and minority-owned vendors

The purpose of the consortium would be to operate the community media/public access television program for residents consistent with the rules and policies developed by the Transition Committee, the Mayor and City Council.

7. **The Vendor Provides a Diverse Community Outreach Program**.

The community media vendor must offer a robust community outreach and engagement program. The objective of which will be to build community media's digital presence over time, with a phased approach that reflects the organization's goals of increasing awareness, promoting community engagement, and establishing itself as a core resource in Atlanta for public media and community storytelling.

In the first six months, we recommend that the vendor focuses on introducing ATL Community Media's mission and re-establishing its historical connection to Channel 24, generating interest among Atlanta residents through a dedicated social media launch plan. Content should focus on Atlanta's unique role in offering free media education and skill-building for the community. The BRC also suggests that much of the target for community outreach be focused on youth.

Youth Engagement and Programming

- For the purpose of better engaging youth, the BRC recommends the following:
    - Develop an action plan for youth engagement and programming with clear, achievable short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals. The plan should include action steps, budget considerations, and estimated timelines to foster a well-rounded support structure for youth.
    - Examples of Key Initiatives:

a. Youth Listening Sessions: Organize sessions to hear directly from young people about their needs, ideas, and preferred activities. These insights will inform future programming and help youth feel actively engaged in shaping program directions.
b. Free or low-cost workshops on practical topics such as digital literacy, career exploration, and art therapy. These sessions offer immediate value, equipping youth with basic skills and an introduction to various fields of interest.
c. Social Media Engagement: Strengthen social media presence to reach youth through their preferred platforms. Interactive content such as polls, Q&As, and live chats should be used to build awareness, promote engagement, and invite youth participation in upcoming programs.

8. The Vendor Creates a Centralized Digital Platform

The technology committee recommend that the creation of a digital platform that will be foundational for ATLCommunity Media's digital transformation. The platform will serve as the central repository and access point for all media assets, facilitating content management, media storage, and secure access.

During the first six months the city or vendor should set up the platform with initial capabilities, including cloud-based Media Asset Management for media storage and access, with added AI-driven tools for scriptwriting, editing, captioning, and metadata tagging. In the next 1 to 3 years, the vendor should scale the platform to support expanded media distribution, live streaming, program scheduling, and analytics-driven decision-making. Later they could integrate advanced AI tools for content scheduling, tagging, and metadata management to create a highly adaptive and efficient platform.

For content accessibility, the vendor should immediately establish online presence with a website and social media accounts, ensuring content accessibility across devices. Implement AI for real-time captioning, automated transcription, and multilingual support across live broadcasts and recorded content.

There will be opportunities for the community media vendor to develop partnerships and collaborations and to focus on training and development.

The operator could:

- Develop a certification program and curriculum for camera operation, editing, and AI-assisted workflows, led by industry experts. These programs should incorporate best practices and be available both in-person and online.
- In the next 1 to 3 years**,** create an on-demand training portal with recorded sessions on emerging technologies, such as AI and 5G, ensuring continuous learning opportunities.
- Offer workshops to the community on digital literacy, content creation, and smartphone video production.

9. The City Provides a Budget to be Leveraged for Private Dollars

The BRC recommends that the city provides a budget for the operation of community media access that is sufficient to attract a capable and credible vendor, is adequate to operate a quality program, and can be leveraged for additional public and private sector funds. Given the City's overall budget and resources that could be made available for ATLCommunity Media, we recommend the following budget:

- Community access operations: $500,000
- Community access capital $100,000
- City programming grants $50,000

Total: $650,000

10. The City Conducts Ongoing Assessment and Evaluation of the Vendor

The BRC believes that the city should require a strong evaluation process to assess the effectiveness of the vendor/operator. Among other things, the city should review:

- Number of residents trained
- Number of applications for channel time
- Number of hours of original programs cablecast or streamed
- Number of weekly productions and hours used in productions
- Number of senior, non-college-age students, and adults participating in the program.
- Funds raised during the previous year

e. Conclusion

The city has a rich history in community media. This medium has allowed ordinary citizens to participate in the production of local content, the development of community narratives, the showcasing of artistic expression, and the engagement in political discourse. For 44 years, this medium has trained tens of thousands of residents and featured many hours of local programming. With the appropriate investment on the part of the city, funds that can be raised from the private sector that could make Atlanta's program once again among the top in the nation.

Residents, including youth, have become consumers rather than producers of information. If those responsible for relaunching and operating community media in Atlanta would embrace and implement the recommendations in this report—and if the city is willing to make the recommended modest investments—we are convinced that the Atlanta public access television program will once again thrive. It will help us move out from the wilderness of information and technology overload and manipulation to a promised land of digital freedom where every voice is lifted, heard and respected.

II. History and Background

The community access media program is mandated under the cable franchise agreement with Comcast Corporation. Part of the cable television franchise fees and a portion of subscriber fees help pay for the program. Public Access Television (referred to throughout this document as "community media") is at a pivotal moment in its history, nationally and locally. For about two decades it has been in the throes of redefining its role and mission in a digital world.

Public Access television goes by several names: community media, community television, access television, PEG, and others. It has been around since the 1960s, but it was not until 1980 that the medium became available and took root in urban communities like Atlanta. Atlanta's program began in 1980 after the city of Atlanta negotiated a franchise agreement with a Canadian-based company named Cablecasting Limited, of which Cable Atlanta was a subsidiary. The company hired Dr. Jabari Simama as its founding director of access, and he led the program until 1986 when the city and the cable company jointly decided to create a nonprofit media organization, People TV, inc., to administer the community media program. People TV operated continuously until 2023 when the city ceased funding the entity. This led to the shutdown of the nonprofit and the shuttering of cable access channel 24.

We recommend that the City rebrand its community access organization, and call it—***ATLCommunity Media***, as recommended by the Community engagement subcommittee. **ATL** is a common and popular abbreviation for Atlanta, and **community media** includes more than just cable television—it implies multimedia across a number of digital platforms. The BRC's Technology subcommittee recommends that the new public access media of the future in Atlanta be built on a digital platform and be called ATLCommunity Media.

At its height, thousands Atlantans were trained and certified to use community media equipment and facilities. The channel programmers offered a full schedule of community-oriented programming—ranging from talk shows to documentary coverage of community and cultural events. Some Atlantans of note who have been on or affiliated with the channel were: RuPaul, Peabo Bryson, the Rev. Hosea Williams, radio legend James "Alley Pat" Patrick, WABE-TV's host, Roy Patterson, Ga. Sen. Julian Bond, former Atlanta City Councilman James Bond, and others. Organizations such as the Butler Street YMCA, the Ga. Legislative Black Caucus, the League of Women Voters, and the NAACP, regularly produced programs that were telecast on the channel.

On July 24, 2024, Mayor Andre Dickens announced a Blue Ribbon Committee (BRC) to make recommendations to the city on how best to restart its public access media program. The BRC met regularly from July 24, 2024, until December 12, 2024. That committee, along with. several subcommittees, focused on: operations, technology, youth engagement, community outreach, and budgeting. Nearly all meetings were open to the public and several of the subcommittees afforded opportunities for community input. In addition, the BRC held community engagement forums and briefings with the city's Utilities Committee and the Atlanta Planning and Advisory Board. The Committee also carefully reviewed the recommendations of prior consultants, especially those from The Buske Group, and incorporated some recommendations as appropriate.

III. Methods

The Mayor appointed a Blue Ribbon Committee to research and review the history of public access television in the country and in Atlanta. The committee itself was comprised of experts in several professions related to cable such as broadcasting, music, digital media, among others. It

included executives familiar with managing large community media operations, public radio stations, music recording companies, technology companies, and higher education institutions. Importantly, it solicited and received substantial input from both young adults and individuals working with young adults. The BRC, or committee members working individually on behalf of the Committee, reviewed literature and heard from national experts in relevant fields. The committee also reviewed online sources, especially those from the Alliance for Community Media.

In 2020 the city procured the services of Sue Buske, head of the Buske Group, who met with various segments of the community prior to making recommendations in 2021. The BRC examined those recommendations carefully and incorporated some them as appropriate. The BRC did most of its work in subcommittees: Operational Structure, Technology, Community Outreach and Engagement, and Youth Programs.

In addition to reviewing comments made by the public from the Buske consultancy, the BRC held its own community engagement meetings/briefings. On Nov. 16, 2024, the BRC met with the Atlanta Planning Advisory Board; on Nov. 12, the City Council Utilities Committee; on Oct. 17, Friendship Baptist Church; on Oct. 10, ATL-PAPA; and on Oct.3, the C.T. Martin Recreation Center. Beyond those meetings, the BRC met with the Atlanta City Council Utilities Committee in August and November of this year; and on July 24, it met with Mayor Andre Dickens. Each subcommittee briefed the chair regularly and more detailed recommendations from them can be found in the Appendices of this report.

IV. Observations

Prior to making recommendation from the BRC, the chair of the BRC would like to offer several observations. First, there exist a small but dedicated group of former public access producers. Some of them don't trust the city, particularly around what they perceive as inequitable funding between the public access operations and the city's government access program. Some of their criticisms are valid and require corrective action. The concept of public, educational and government access (PEG) is one that embraces three interrelated ways to connect with the public. They all are important means for keeping the public informed and allowing residents to communicate with public officials.

It is beyond the scope of this report to discuss educational and government access in detail, but I believe the city must accept that the kinship between the three requires closer collaboration. There will be friction and unhealthy competition for meager resources unless this happens. Going forward, we recommend that the city become an active partner to the city's community media program. This means more than just providing greater funding to public access, it means supporting the vendor/operator in seeking private and corporate funding, providing technical assistance upon request, and most importantly, providing better oversight.

One concrete suggestion is that the city thinks about its community program and makes it a part of important city initiatives such as: youth, the environment and climate, workforce and education, and the arts. Connect community media to major initiatives such as those and watch the channel become a virtual community for residents, providing connectivity and neighborhood identity. For this to occur, both the city and the vendor operating community media must better engage with the public, particularly youth and school-aged residents.

We also want to emphasize the importance of strong leadership. When donors contribute to programs, they are, in essence, investing in the program's leadership. We believe if the city implements the recommendations in this report, the city and vendor will avoid the pitfalls of the past and embrace future opportunities.

Finally, this report does not attempt to untangle the web of confusion around the historic funding of public access. To review audited financial reports and policy changes throughout the 44-year history of community access in Atlanta is beyond the scope of this report. What this report does do is to propose funding, prospectively, that we believe will allow for the operations of a quality community media program that public officials desire and the residents deserve.

V. Recommendations

The Blue Ribbon Committee**:**

1. Recommends that a Transition Committee (TC) be Created

We recommend that the City forms a transition committee comprised of seven members: Chair of the BRC, two members of the BRC, two representatives of the Mayor's office (one of which will be the Mayor's Chief Communications Officer), a representative of higher education, and a former public access television producer or representative of the community at-large.

The TC will perform the following task:

- Manage the public access staff, operations, channel, and facilities until a permanent vendor is in place. The new operator/vendor is anticipated to begin on or before July 1, 2025.

- Screen applications and recommend staff to be hired (on a temporary basis) to operate community media program, train the public in television and media production, assist in the playback of the cable channel and live streams, and to maintain equipment and facilities.
- Develop rules and policies for the ongoing operations of community media taking in consideration the historic rules of access operations and best practices.
- Negotiate terms of an agreement with a new operating vendor (referred to as the "Vendor").
- Work with the City on legislation necessary to effect the transfer of the obligation for operating access to the new vendor.

2. Recommends that the City Creates a Community Media Advisory Board

The city shall reconstitute the now defunct Cable Television Advisory Board or create a new Community Media Advisory Board (CMAB) with oversight authority over community access operations, equipment, programming and facilities. The board might consist of seven residents, appointed in this manner: (a) One appointment by the councilpersons from each of the three at-large posts (with the concurrence of the four district councilmembers); (b) three appointments by the Mayor; and (c) One appointment by the President of Council. In total this board will be comprised of seven members. This Board shall stay abreast of the latest trends and developments in PEG programming and operations; receive and investigate all complaints from the public, particularly those that allege the wrongful denial of access to any community media program, equipment or facilities; hold an annual public hearing on behalf of the City; and present to the Mayor and City Council an annual report on PEG in Atlanta. The Mayor's Office shall provide

staff for the CMAB. A representative from City's law department shall be in attendance at its meetings.

3. Recommends the City Provides Space for a Community Media "Hub"

We will refer to this headquarters as the central "Hub." The BRC has identified space at 2 Peachtree Street. We recommend that this space be provided rent-free for no less that 12 months. In addition, we recommend that the city collaborate with the vendor/operator of community media to establish three satellite locations in city recreation/community centers where space is available. These satellite locations will be linked to the central Hub by fiber or another appropriate technology. The satellite "mini-hubs" will serve as makerspaces for media creators, centers for media production training, and locations where residents can upload video/audio files for playout on the community media channel and platforms. The value of the city's space shall be considered as in-kind contribution and provided at no cost to residents in exchange for the vendor providing services to the public at no cost.

4. Recommends that the City Provides Technical Assistance (TA)

Such assistance could include:

- Playout of the community access channel
- Design of production facilities
- Recommendations on equipment purchases
- Potential partnership with other city departments and offices

Technical assistance provided by the city shall be considered as in-kind contribution.

5. Recommends Nondiscriminatory Access

The city should require that the vendor provides access to equipment, facilities, and channel time on a first-come, first-serve, nondiscriminatory basis, except to accommodate/promote programming with specific underrepresented groups. For example, the vendor should be encouraged to reserve production and channel time for youth engagement. The BRC strongly recommends that city requires the traditions of community media and the history of civil rights and equality be the bedrock principles on which the access program is built and sustained.

6. Recommends a Higher Education Consortium to Manage Community Media.

The City's Transition Committee should negotiate with local higher education institutions for the purpose of encouraging them to form a consortium to manage the city's community media program. This higher education consortium will have **one lead institution** along with representatives from other area colleges. Several higher ed institutions participated on the BRC and have expressed an interest in possibly being the lead institution.

While it is possible that one college or university could operate the community media program as a single entity, we believe the public will be better served by having a consortium of institutions collaborating, sharing resources, students, faculty and marketing expertise for the benefit of residents.

For the purpose of selecting a lead institution, it is our recommendation that the city issue an **RFQ** and qualify the best institutions it deems capable of leading this effort. Once the city has reviewed qualifications, it should establish a list of ranked finalists. Beginning with the top finalist, the city should enter into negotiations. If negotiations are not successful with the top ranked finalist, then the city should commence negotiation with the second ranked institution,

and so on and so forth until a successful agreement is reached. The criteria, among other considerations, should include:

- Experience of management team and expertise of key staff
- Demonstrated experience operating a community or public media entity and familiarity with community media history and philosophy
- Capability to manage human resources and payroll functions
- Capability to manage a media training program and media production facilities
- Demonstrated expertise in community outreach and engagement, including to youth, minorities, and makers/artists
- Successful record in fundraising
- Projection of grants and in-kind contributions the vendor will provide on an annual basis
- Expertise in establishing partnerships with private, public and governmental organizations
- Record of success in managing diversity and working with small, local, female and minority-owned vendors

College faculty, staff, and students working with residents and community organizations might strengthen relationships and contribute to community building and empowerment. College students serving as mentors to middle and high school students, of necessity, would participate as interns, apprentices, and community facilitators. Working closely with schools, the city, and community and neighborhood-based organizations, this consortium should be able to leverage resources of its respective institutions for the benefit of residents and participants. Under this

model, Atlanta would serve as a living laboratory for students to acquire and refine media production skills in an environment similar to where they will someday work.

There is precedent for a higher education institution operating a community access program and operations dating back at least to Austin Community Media in the 1970s. Another benefit is that the public has already invested in in higher education equipment and facilities such as :

- Media production equipment and facilities for educational purposes, which might be available for training the public in video, audio, and digital production when they are not being used for coursework and other related activities.

- The educational content creators who are skilled in producing local programming for the community channel could provide a window into events and activities on campuses like presentations by nationally known speakers and important thought leaders. Students, faculty and staff will increase their colleges' footprint in surrounding and nearby neighborhoods, providing documentary coverage of seasonal festivals, civic and block club meetings, and NPU meetings. Above all, participation in the consortium will see Atlanta and its neighborhoods from a unique lens.

Greater utilization of public investments better serves the interest of all. The City could bring additional resources to the partnership such as:

  - Funding, equipment, and makerspace resources for the purpose of training the public to create community-oriented programming for telecast on the community cable channel and other platforms selected by the consortium.
  - Equipment and facilities to strengthen educational programs at respective institutions when they are not being used by the public.

- Technical and engineering assistance to the consortium as part of its commitment to the success of community media.

7. Recommends a **Diverse Community Outreach Program**.

The community media vendor must offer a robust community outreach and engagement program. The objective of which will be to build community media's digital presence over time, with a phased approach that reflects the organization's goals of increasing awareness, promoting community engagement, and establishing itself as a core resource in Atlanta for public media and community storytelling.

In the first six months, we recommend that the vendor focuses on introducing ATL Community Media's mission and re-establishing its historical connection to Channel 24, generating interest among Atlanta residents through a dedicated social media launch plan. Content should focus on Atlanta's unique role in offering free media education and skill-building for the community. The BRC also suggests that much of the target for community outreach be focused on youth.

Youth Engagement and Programming

- For the purpose of better engaging youth, the BRC recommends the following:
  - Develop an action plan for youth engagement and programming with clear, achievable short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals. The plan should include action steps, budget considerations, and estimated timelines to foster a well-rounded support structure for youth.

- The short-term phase (0 to 3 months) the plan should focus on initiating foundational, volunteer-led programs that build connections with youth and set the groundwork for future engagement. By prioritizing quick, low-cost wins, the vendor can demonstrate immediate community commitment and responsiveness to youth needs.
    - Examples of Key Initiatives:

    1. Youth Listening Sessions: Organize sessions to hear directly from young people about their needs, ideas, and preferred activities. These insights will inform future programming and help youth feel actively engaged in shaping program directions. 2. Free or low-cost workshops on practical topics such as digital literacy, career exploration, and art therapy. These sessions offer immediate value, equipping youth with basic skills and an introduction to various fields of interest. 3. Social Media Engagement: Strengthen social media presence to reach youth through their preferred platforms. Interactive content such as polls, Q&As, and live chats should be used to build awareness, promote engagement, and invite youth participation in upcoming programs.
- The long-term plan should focus be on creating cornerstone programs that establish lasting impact and adaptability. By building strong community partnerships and creating sustainable frameworks, the operators can ensure continued support and growth for youth engagement initiatives.

More details on recommendation for youth and community engagement can be found in the Appendices of this report under the heading Community Outreach and Engagement.

8. Recommends a Centralized Digital Platform

The technology subcommittee recommends that the vendor creates a digital platform that will be foundational for ATLCommunity Media's digital transformation. The platform will serve as the central repository and access point for all media assets, facilitating content management, media storage, and secure access.

During the first six months the city or vendor should set up the platform with initial capabilities, including cloud-based Media Asset Management for media storage and access, with added AI-driven tools for scriptwriting, editing, captioning, and metadata tagging. In the next 1 to 3 years, the vendor should scale the platform to support expanded media distribution, live streaming, program scheduling, and analytics-driven decision-making. Later they could integrate advanced AI tools for content scheduling, tagging, and metadata management to create a highly adaptive and efficient platform.

For content accessibility, the vendor should immediately establish online presence with a website and social media accounts, ensuring content accessibility across devices. Implement AI for real-time captioning, automated transcription, and multilingual support across live broadcasts and recorded content. During the first year, we also recommend broadening accessibility features by expanding multi-language support and customizable captions. Later launch a mobile app and expand accessibility to popular streaming platforms, such as Roku, Amazon Fire TV, and Apple TV, reaching a broader audience.

There will be opportunities for the community media vendor to develop partnerships and collaborations and to focus on training and development.

The operator could:

- Develop a certification program and curriculum for camera operation, editing, and AI-assisted workflows, led by industry experts. These programs should incorporate best practices and be available both in-person and online.
- In the next 1 to 3 years**,** create an on-demand training portal with recorded sessions on emerging technologies, such as AI and 5G, ensuring continuous learning opportunities.
- Offer workshops to the community on digital literacy, content creation, and smartphone video production.

For more detailed recommendations on **technology**, please see the full committee report in the Appendix of this report.

9. Provides a Budget to be Leveraged for Private Dollars

The BRC recommends that the city provides a budget for the operation of community media access that is sufficient to attract a capable and credible vendor, is adequate to operate a quality program, and can be leveraged for additional public and private sector funding. Over the years, the city has collected millions of dollars in cable television franchise fees and PEG payments. In the Buske Report, Buske, a national expert in cable television, estimated that a moderately funded public access program would cost at least $600,000 annual. We agree with her, particularly considering the fact that many cities the size of Atlanta provide more for the operations of community media. Given the Atlanta's overall budget and resources that could be made available for ATLCommunity Media, we recommend the following budget:

- Community access operations: $500,000
- Community access capital $100,000

- City programming grants[1] $50,000

Total: $650,000

With a city investment of $650,000, the vendor over time should be able to match that amount with grants and donations from the public and private sectors. At minimum, the BRC believes that an educational consortium is best position to integrate a community medium program into its mission of service, teaching, and research missions and raise a half of million dollars per year, once its establishes itself. Not immediately, but over time, the BRC believes the vendor operating community media will be able to match the city's contributions, dollar for dollar. If that occurred, the total budget for community media in Atlanta would be more like $1 million per year. This should put ATLCommunity Media in a position to excel.

10. Recommends Assessment and Evaluation

The BRC believes that the city should require a strong evaluation process to assess the effectiveness of the vendor/operator. Among other things, the city should review:

[1] The city has the discretion to allocate grants from private or public funds within its budget. For example, the city could allocate a specific amount for youth programming from private sector funds donated to the city for the "Year of the Youth." The funding could be used to teach youth how to produce podcast or videocast about Atlanta's climate and environmental concerns. Alternatively, the city may be able to use some summer workforce funding for youth to work helping other young people learn how to produce a series of programs on positive things occurring in the city. Alternatively, the city could allocate specific amounts from the arts budget for artists to produce programming about local arts. Funding for seniors could also enrich the community access channels. By identifying non-cable franchise funding—and earmarking some of it for the production and development of community access programming—the city will be supporting the medium, engaging and animating the community, and ensuring that the channel's content reflects the diversity of city and addresses community needs.

- Number of residents trained
- Number of applications for channel time
- Number of hours of original programs cablecast or streamed
- Number of weekly productions and hours used in productions
- Number of senior, non-college-age students, and adults participating in the program.
- Funds raised during the previous year

V. Conclusion

The city has a rich history in community media. This medium has allowed ordinary citizens to participate in the production of local content, the development of community narratives, the showcasing of artistic expression, and the engagement in political discourse. For 44 years, this medium has trained tens of thousands residents and featured hours of local programming. With the appropriate investment on the part of the city, funds that can be raised from the private sector that could make Atlanta's program once again among the top in the nation.

The best way to ensure that the relaunching of community media in Atlanta will be a successful is to pay attention to who will be at the helm of **leadership**. The BRC strongly recommends that the operating vendor (with the city mandating it) invest in strong leadership for this program. We recommend that the vendor/operator undertakes a national search to find the best and right leader—someone with a demonstrated record of success in building successful community media programs in urban environments.

A large section of this report focuses on youth. That was on purpose. While we believe community media should always remain open and viable to all, there must be a greater emphasis placed on youth engagement than in the past. This will necessitate developing strategic partnerships with schools, youth organizations and local governments.

Residents, including youth, have become consumers rather than producers of information. ATLCommunity Media must lead the necessary change in this reality, turning consumers of info into producers of it. If those responsible for relaunching and operating community media in Atlanta would embrace and implement the recommendations in this report—and if the city is willing to make the recommended modest investments—we are convinced that the Atlanta public access television program will once again thrive. It will help us move out from the wilderness of info and tech overload and media manipulation to a promised land of digital freedom where every voice is lifted, heard and respected.

VI. Appendices

Community Outreach and Engagement Subcommittee Report

ATL Community Media Social Media Strategy & Budget by Timeline

Objective: To build, sustain, and grow ATL Community Media's digital presence over time, with a phased approach that reflects the organization's goals of increasing awareness, promoting community engagement, and establishing itself as a core resource in Atlanta for public media and community storytelling.

0-6 Months: Building Awareness and Initial Engagement

In this initial phase, the focus is on introducing ATL Community Media's mission, re-establishing

its historical connection to Channel 24, and generating interest among Atlanta residents through a dedicated social media launch plan. Content will emphasize ATL Community Media's unique role in offering free media education and skill-building for the community.

Goals:

● Introduce ATL Community Media to Atlanta residents.

● Build awareness of the educational and skill-building opportunities available.

● Begin community conversations to understand interests and media needs.

Key Content and Activities:

1. **Mission and Legacy**

○ Posts focusing on Channel 24's history, ATL Community Media's goals, and its dedication to accessible media.

○ Community testimonials to build credibility and emotional connection.

2. **Educational and Skill-Building Opportunities**

○ Posts about upcoming workshops, skill highlights, and free media resources.

3. **Community Stories and Engagement Prompts**

○ Posts spotlighting Atlanta residents and asking questions to involve followers in ATL Community Media's future content.

4. **Content and Social Media Strategy Execution**

○ Launch of a 30-day content calendar that covers a mix of posts (text, video, image-based).

○ Regular posting schedule with daily engagement to respond to comments, gather feedback, and adjust content based on interactions.

Estimated Budget (0-6 Months):

● **Content Creation**: $2,000 (graphics, video editing, and story development for social media posts).● **Social Media Management**: $2,000 (hiring a social media manager and a community engagement coordinator).

● **Promotions and Advertising**: $500 (Facebook, Instagram ads for targeted outreach).

● **Tools and Operational Costs**: $200 (content scheduling and analytics tools).

● **Contingency**: $300 for adjustments based on early performance data.

Total Estimated Budget (0-6 Months): $5,000

1-3 Years: Strengthening Community Engagement and Expanding Reach

In the mid-term, the focus shifts to deepening connections with the community and expanding ATL Community Media's reach. This phase will include more structured content, regular features, and the introduction of programs designed to build media skills among Atlanta's youth and aspiring creators. The social media strategy will focus on sustainability, consistent engagement, and partnerships.

Goals:

● Establish a steady stream of educational and community-driven content.

● Increase follower engagement and expand digital reach through collaborations.

● Build and nurture a network of community advocates and media enthusiasts.

Key Content and Activities:

1. **Regular Educational Series and Skill-Building Content**

○ Monthly workshops or virtual events (highlighted on social media).

○ Series on essential media skills (e.g., video editing, sound production), and storytelling.

2. **Feature Segments**

○ Weekly or bi-weekly "Community Voices" or "Success Stories" series highlighting local creators, community leaders, and small business owners.

○ Introduction of media “how-to” segments to inspire viewers and build audience skills.

3. **Engagement and Partnerships**

○ Collaboration with local influencers, organizations, and schools to amplify reach and attract diverse followers.

○ Online contests or challenges to foster community interaction and showcase ATL Community Media as a platform for local voices.

4. **Promoted Content and Advertising**○ Increased ad budget to support ATL Community Media’s growth, with targeted promotions for workshops and community spotlights.

Estimated Budget (1-3 Years):

● **Content Creation**: $6,000 per year (continued video production, graphics, and feature content).

● **Social Media and Community Manager**: $8,000 per year (increased hours to support more consistent engagement).

● **Promotions and Advertising**: $2,000 per year (ads and boosted posts).

● **Collaborations**: $1,500 per year (stipends or gifts for local influencers and partners).

● **Tools and Operational Costs**: $400 per year (upgraded analytics and scheduling tools).

Total Estimated Budget (1-3 Years): $17,900 per year

5-10 Years: Sustained Impact and Community-Driven Content

In the long term, ATL Community Media’s digital presence will serve as a powerful community media hub, with a loyal audience and deep-rooted partnerships. Content will focus on amplifying community voices, offering advanced media skills training, and ensuring that the organization

remains a staple in Atlanta's media landscape.

Goals:

● Establish ATL Community Media as a trusted resource for media training and community storytelling.

● Sustain engagement through advanced media workshops, community-driven content, and ongoing partnerships.

● Secure funding and resources to ensure long-term social media and outreach viability.

Key Content and Activities:

1. **Advanced Workshops and Media Training**

○ Partner with local colleges, trade schools, and businesses to offer mentorship and internships.

○ Introduce advanced media training modules, tailored to the needs of a maturing audience.

2. **Youth and Community-Led Content**

○ Support youth-led media projects that create content for ATL Community Media's platforms.3. 4. ○ Develop a grant program for teens and young adults to produce community-focused media projects (in line with the Youth Engagement Endowment Fund).

Continued Partnerships and Community Collaboration

○ Deepen collaborations with community groups, government organizations, and other media networks.

○ Host live-streamed community events and town halls, positioning ATL Community Media as a go-to platform for local discourse.

Ongoing Digital Marketing and Community Growth

○ Maintain a consistent social media presence with varied, high-quality content.

○ Build an email list or a subscriber model to notify the audience of important updates, events, and content.

Estimated Budget (5-10 Years):

● **Content Creation**: $10,000 per year (increased focus on professional-quality videos, community-led projects).

● **Advanced Social Media and Community Team**: $12,000 per year (expanded team to support larger community reach).

● **Promotions and Digital Marketing**: $4,000 per year (consistent ads, email marketing, and boosted community events).

● **Community-Driven Content Funding**: $5,000 per year (support for youth projects and media initiatives).

● **Tools and Operational Costs**: $500 per year (advanced analytics, content management tools, CRM for audience tracking).

Total Estimated Budget (5-10 Years): $31,500 per year

1. Proposal for Youth Engagement and Community Outreach Visibility Initiative

0-6 Months: Foundation Building and Initial Engagement

The first six months will focus on setting up the groundwork for youth engagement, establishing visibility, and creating a robust funnel strategy. This phase is essential for laying the foundation for long-term community building and establishing initial relationships with Atlanta's young creatives and community organizations.

Action Steps:

1. **Define Demographic Focus and Outreach Strategy**

○ **Demographic Refinement**: Adjust target audience age range to 16-29 years to capture young filmmakers and aspiring media creators, while maintaining a broader reach for potential mentors.

○ **Demographic Research**: Conduct surveys or focus groups to analyze media consumption habits of 16-29-year-olds in Atlanta. Target popular platforms (e.g., Instagram, TikTok) to shape outreach strategy.

○ **Social Media Funnel Setup**: Use a two-part funnel strategy:

■ **Funnel 1: Youth Engagement**– Create targeted social media campaigns and digital sign-ups for young people interested in media skills.

■ **Funnel 2: Creator Collaboration**– Target established creators (30+) on platforms like LinkedIn to invite them as mentors or collaborators.

○ **Data Collection and Tagging**: Use digital forms, segmenting lists by interest and demographic for follow-up communication.

2. **Initial Partnership Development**

○ **Partnership Research**: Identify and build a list of schools, community centers, and nonprofits in Atlanta that align with Fourth House's mission, with a focus on partners working with youth.

○ **Industry Connections**: Reach out to local film studios and young producers to introduce Fourth House Creatives and explore collaborations on community workshops.

3. **Community Event Launch**

○ **Pizza Social Launch Event**: Host a Pizza Social at a local venue like Pizza Verdura Sincera to connect with young filmmakers and introduce Fourth House's mission.

○ **Engagement Goals**: Provide information about media skills workshops, capture contact information for follow-up, and promote social media channels to encourage ongoing engagement.

4. **Digital Presence and Brand Visibility**○ **Content Rollout**: Implement a 30-day content plan on social media to introduce Fourth House Creatives, its mission, and upcoming events.

○ **Social Media Engagement**: Engage with followers through interactive posts, Q&A, and story prompts to encourage conversations around public access media.

Budget Estimate (0-6 Months):

● **Social Media Campaign & Content Creation**: $3,000

● **Community Event (Pizza Social)**: $1,500

● **Partnership Development and Outreach**: $1,000

● **Tools and Software (Data Collection, Analytics)**: $500

Total: **$6,000**

1-3 Years: Strengthening Engagement and Expanding Reach

The next phase will solidify community connections, expand youth engagement through structured programming, and strengthen partnerships to build Fourth House as a staple in Atlanta's media education landscape.

Action Steps:

1. 2. 3. **Expand Educational and Skill-Building Programs**

○ **Workshop Series**: Host quarterly workshops focused on storytelling, video editing, and media production. Partner with local film studios and media organizations to provide hands-on training.

○ **Youth Mentorship Program**: Develop a structured mentorship program matching young creators with established filmmakers, providing practical experience and guidance.

Strengthen Community Visibility through Ongoing Events

○ **Quarterly Networking Events**: Hold regular community networking events that include industry panels, Q&A sessions, and film screenings of youth-produced content.

○ **Public Access Collaborations**: Collaborate with other organizations to champion public access media in Atlanta, increase visibility, and share Fourth House Creatives' resources.

Strategic Partnerships and Collaborative Projects

○ **School and Nonprofit Partnerships**: Formalize partnerships with schools and nonprofits for sustained outreach and media education programs.4. ○ **Young Creative Partnerships**: Form alliances with young producers and

creative organizations in Atlanta to build a network of youth media advocates.

○ **Grants for Youth-Produced Content**: Implement a Youth Engagement Endowment Fund, distributing $2,500-$5,000 per quarter to support youth-led film and media projects.

Robust Digital Strategy for Sustained Engagement

○ **Social Media Expansion**: Increase digital presence by featuring success stories, community spotlights, and "behind-the-scenes" content from Fourth House workshops.

○ **Targeted Ad Campaigns**: Use boosted posts and digital ads to reach new audience segments, focusing on youth and community-focused media groups in Atlanta.

○ **Content Engagement Tools**: Implement polling and Q&A on social media to drive interaction and continuously collect feedback on audience interests.

Budget Estimate (1-3 Years):

● **Educational Workshops & Mentorship Program**: $12,000/year

● **Community Events (Quarterly)**: $10,000/year

● **Youth Engagement Endowment Fund**: $20,000/year

● **Strategic Partnerships and Outreach**: $5,000/year

● **Social Media Management and Promotion**: $8,000/year

Total: **$55,000 per year**

5-10 Years: Long-Term Impact and Community-Driven Content

This phase will focus on solidifying Fourth House Creatives as a central media resource and establishing a sustainable community-driven content ecosystem. Programs will be expanded to support youth-led media initiatives and empower community members to create meaningful content representing Atlanta's diverse voices.

Action Steps:

1. **Advanced Media Programs and Internship Opportunities**

○ **Advanced Skills Training**: Offer bi-annual advanced workshops on niche media skills (e.g., documentary filmmaking, digital storytelling) in partnership with local colleges and media experts.

○ **Internship Program**: Partner with colleges to create internship programs for youth interested in public access media, offering hands-on experience with Fourth House's media projects.2. **Community-Driven Content Ecosystem**

○ **Youth Media Project Grants**: Allocate funding to support youth-led media initiatives, with an emphasis on projects that showcase Atlanta's community stories and local issues.

○ **User-Generated Content Program**: Encourage community members to submit stories and content, to be curated and shared on Fourth House's platforms.

○ **Community-Produced Showcases**: Host annual showcases or mini-festivals for youth-produced films and projects to celebrate local talent and reinforce Fourth House's role in Atlanta's media landscape.

3. **Sustained Partnerships and Expanded Reach**

○ **Long-Term Partnerships with Schools and Media Orgs**: Expand partnerships with educational institutions and media organizations to offer continuous programs and outreach opportunities.

○ **Public Policy Engagement**: Engage with local government to advocate for policies that support public access media and youth media education in Atlanta.

4. **Advanced Digital Strategy and Engagement**

○ **Email Subscription Model**: Develop a subscription-based email program to keep engaged audiences updated with workshops, opportunities, and success stories.

○ **Consistent Social Media Presence**: Maintain an active social media presence with diverse content, encouraging followers to share and participate in community stories.

○ **Virtual Community Spaces**: Create online forums or social groups for

continuous engagement and discussions about Atlanta's media landscape.

Budget Estimate (5-10 Years):

- **Advanced Training Programs and Internships**: $15,000/year
- **Community-Driven Content Grants**: $20,000/year
- **Annual Community Showcase**: $10,000/year
- **Sustained Partnerships and Outreach**: $7,500/year
- **Digital Marketing and Subscription Engagement**: $6,000/year

Total: **$58,500**

2. Youth Engagement and Programming Recommendations

Meeting Objective:

To review, discuss, and finalize recommendations for youth engagement and programming with clear, achievable short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals. The plan includes action steps, budget considerations, and estimated timelines to foster a well-rounded support structure for youth.

Short-Term Recommendations (0-6 Months)

Overview:

The short-term phase will focus on initiating foundational, volunteer-led programs that build connections with youth and set the groundwork for future engagement. By prioritizing quick, low-cost wins, we can demonstrate immediate community commitment and responsiveness to youth needs.

Key Initiatives:

A. **Youth Listening Sessions**

Objective: Organize sessions to hear directly from young people about their needs, ideas, and preferred activities. These insights will inform future programming and help youth feel actively engaged in shaping program directions.

B. **Introductory Workshops**

Objective: Provide free or low-cost workshops on practical topics such as digital literacy,

career exploration, and art therapy. These sessions offer immediate value, equipping youth with basic skills and an introduction to various fields of interest.

C. **Social Media Engagement**

Objective: Strengthen social media presence to reach youth through their preferred platforms. Interactive content such as polls, Q&As, and live chats will be used to build awareness, promote engagement, and invite youth participation in upcoming programs.

Mid-Term Recommendations (1-3 Years)

Overview:

Mid-term initiatives are geared toward establishing structured, sustainable programs that facilitate meaningful development and growth. This phase emphasizes building partnerships, providing resources, and developing leadership opportunities for youth to contribute actively.

Key Initiatives and Estimated Costs:

1. **Mentorship Program Development**

Objective: Create a mentorship program that pairs youth with professionals across various industries. Partnerships with local businesses, alumni networks, and other organizations will provide lasting mentorship opportunities and pathways for skill development.

Estimated Cost: $10,000 annually for coordination, recruitment, and support resources

2. **Youth Council Leadership Training**

Objective: Implement leadership training specifically designed for Youth Council members, empowering them to take an active role in planning and decision-making. This training will cultivate future leaders and enhance council effectiveness.

Estimated Cost: $5,000 annually for workshops, materials, and guest speakers

3. **Community Partnership Initiatives**

Lead: Tenill, Tuesday

Objective: Develop collaborations with schools, community centers, and youth organizations to co-host programs, share resources, and reach underserved demographics. This initiative aims to increase program accessibility and strengthen community ties.

Estimated Cost: $3,000 annually for partnership support and outreach materials

4. **Youth Coverage of Atlanta Events (e.g., One Music Fest)**

Objective: Engage youth in covering key city events, providing real-world experience in media production and public engagement. This initiative will raise program visibility and enhance community involvement.

Estimated Cost: $2,500 per event for equipment, transportation, and media support

Long-Term Recommendations (5-10+ Years)

Overview:

The long-term plan focuses on creating cornerstone programs that establish lasting impact and adaptability. By building strong community partnerships and creating sustainable frameworks, we can ensure continued support and growth for youth engagement initiatives.

Key Initiatives and Estimated Costs:1. **Youth Career Pathways Program**

Objective: Develop a comprehensive program to connect youth with apprenticeships, internships, and hands-on learning across industries. Collaborate with local businesses, trade schools, and colleges to support career development and open doors to meaningful job opportunities.

Estimated Cost: $50,000 annually for program setup, partnerships, and staffing

2. **Youth-Led Media and Content Creation Hub**

Objective: Establish a media center where youth can create and share digital content (videos, podcasts, etc.) about community-relevant topics. This hub will foster creative skills, build confidence, and give youth a platform to express their perspectives.

Estimated Cost: $100,000 for setup, $25,000 annually for ongoing maintenance and equipment

3. **Youth Engagement Endowment Fund**

Objective: Create a quarterly fund providing $2,500 to $5,000 grants to teens interested in creating their own film productions. This fund will support young filmmakers by giving them access to resources and creative opportunities.

Estimated Cost: $10,000–$20,000 annually for grants and fund administration

Youth Engagement and Programming Section: Additional Key Initiatives

Key Initiatives:

1. **Peer-Led Programming**

Objective: Implement a structure where older youth mentor younger participants in areas such as technology, media, and the arts. This promotes leadership and fosters a supportive, collaborative learning environment.

2. **Youth Voices Series**

Objective: Launch a "Youth Voices" series to showcase youth experiences and perspectives through interviews, social media takeovers, and blog posts. This initiative will empower youth to share their insights and build a community dialogue.

3. **Skill-Building Workshops**

Objective: Host workshops on essential skills such as communication, project management, and financial literacy. These sessions will prepare youth for personal and professional success and will include local experts as guest speakers.

Cost Analysis and Budget for Mid- to Long-Term Programs (Per Group of Students)

Each scenario below outlines the budget for varying cohort sizes (30 to 60 students) using standardized metrics. This ensures that staffing, materials, and logistical support are scalable to accommodate different group sizes effectively. **Standard Metrics:**

- **Program Assistants:** $100/day per assistant
- **Director:** $500/day
- **Producer:** $350/day
- **Food and Refreshments:** $10 per student, per day
- **Transportation (MARTA/Uber Credits):** $10 per student, per week

Scenario 1: Cohort of 30 Students

Weekly Costs (2 Days/Week):

- **Program Assistants** (2 assistants): $100/day each = $400/week
- **Director:** $500/day = $1,000/week

● **Producer:** $350/day = $700/week

● **Food and Refreshments:** $10/student/day = $600/week

● **Transportation (MARTA/Uber Credits):** $10/student/week = $300/week

Total Weekly Cost: $3,000

Monthly Cost (4 weeks): $12,000

Estimated Quarterly Cost (3 Months): $36,000

Scenario 2: Cohort of 45 Students

Weekly Costs (2 Days/Week):

● **Program Assistants** (3 assistants): $100/day each = $600/week

● **Director:** $500/day = $1,000/week

● **Producer:** $350/day = $700/week

● **Food and Refreshments:** $10/student/day = $900/week

● **Transportation (MARTA/Uber Credits):** $10/student/week = $450/week

Total Weekly Cost: $3,650

Monthly Cost (4 weeks): $14,600

Estimated Quarterly Cost (3 Months): $43,800

Scenario 3: Cohort of 60 Students

Weekly Costs (2 Days/Week):

● **Program Assistants** (4 assistants): $100/day each = $800/week● **Director:** $500/day = $1,000/week

● **Producer:** $350/day = $700/week

● **Food and Refreshments:** $10/student/day = $1,200/week

● **Transportation (MARTA/Uber Credits):** $10/student/week = $600/week

Total Weekly Cost: $4,300

Monthly Cost (4 weeks): $17,200

Estimated Quarterly Cost (3 Months): $51,600

Summary of Quarterly Cost Estimates by Cohort Size:

● **30 Students:** $36,000 per quarter

● **45 Students:** $43,800 per quarter

● **60 Students:** $51,600 per quarter

These standardized metrics allow for consistent budget planning across different cohort sizes, ensuring each group has access to the necessary resources and support to succeed. This proposal provides Atlanta's youth with meaningful programming options designed to foster community involvement, skill-building, and growth.

Technology Subcommittee Report

1. Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to outline actionable recommendations for modernizing Atlanta Public Television (APTV) by implementing strategic technology initiatives. These recommendations focus on phased improvements in digital infrastructure, a centralized digital platform, content accessibility, and audience engagement, while fostering collaboration and inclusion within the Atlanta community. APTV aims to enhance its relevance, accessibility, and impact by becoming a forward-thinking community hub, especially through a dedicated Community Media Center. Key recommendations are broken down into short-term (0-6 months), medium-term (1-3 years), and long-term (5-10 years+) goals to ensure that each phase aligns with budget constraints and community needs.

- **Short-Term (0-6 months)**: Establish a temporary Community Media Center with foundational Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools for scriptwriting, automated captioning, and editing. Set up a centralized digital platform for media management and streamline initial production workflows.
- **1-3 Years**: Build a permanent Community Media Center with fully equipped production studios, neighborhood Makerspaces, and expanded AI and Internet of Things (IoT) capabilities, enhancing content personalization and engagement.
- **5-10+ Years**: Prepare APTV for next-generation broadcasting standards (5G and beyond) with advanced AI-powered content creation, augmented reality (AR), and immersive experiences that expand APTV's reach and engagement.

2. Introduction

Atlanta Public Television is at a pivotal moment to redefine its role in public broadcasting by embracing digital transformation and community engagement. Challenges such as outdated infrastructure, limited streaming options, and a need for centralized content management can be addressed with a phased approach to modernization. The Community Media Center will provide resources, tools, and education, serving as a collaborative space for local content creators and audiences. These improvements will position APTV as a vital resource for Atlanta's diverse population, supporting hyper-local programming, free speech, and community-driven media creation.

3. Digital Transformation

Centralized Digital Platform as the Core Element

- **Centralized Platform Vision**: Establishing a centralized digital platform will be foundational for APTV's digital transformation. This platform will serve as the central repository and access point for all media assets, facilitating content management, media storage, and secure access.

- **Short-Term Plan (0-6 months)**: Set up the platform with initial capabilities, including cloud-based Media Asset Management (MAM) for media storage and access, with added AI-driven tools for scriptwriting, editing, captioning, and metadata tagging. Automate workflows for approvals, quality checks, and distribution to optimize operations.
- **1-3 Years**: Scale the platform to support expanded media distribution, live streaming, program scheduling, and analytics-driven decision-making.
- **5-10 Years**: Integrate advanced AI tools for content scheduling, tagging, and metadata management to create a highly adaptive and efficient platform.

Upgrade Infrastructure

- **6-Month Outlook**: Initial operations will prioritize collaborative programming and community engagement, with Channel 24 returning to air via a temporary Community Media Center with basic video/audio production capabilities. The primary focus will be planning and public relations to lay a strong foundation for a more advanced center.
- **1-3 Years**: Establish a fully functional, permanent Community Media Center with production studios, editing suites, and neighborhood Makerspaces. Each Makerspace will feature localized video editing equipment, public check-out facilities, and meeting spaces for community engagement.
- **Long-Term Vision (5-10 Years)**: Leverage edge computing and 5G connectivity to support remote production capabilities, enhance real-time access to content, and maintain flexibility for future technological advancements.

Adopt New Technologies

- **Short-Term (0-6 months)**: Begin incorporating AI tools within the centralized platform for scriptwriting, automated editing, and captioning. AI-powered tagging will streamline content organization and metadata management.
- **1-3 Years**: Deploy IoT-enabled devices across studios for automated production quality control, such as smart cameras with adaptive lighting, and use AI-driven personalization to tailor content for audiences.
- **5-10 Years**: Expand AI capabilities within the platform for fully automated scheduling, content recommendations, and immersive features, such as AR overlays for live broadcasts.

4. Content Accessibility

Multi-Platform Access

- **Short-Term (0-6 months)**: Establish APTV's online presence with a website and social media accounts, ensuring content accessibility across devices.
- **1-3 Years**: Launch a mobile app and expand accessibility to popular streaming platforms, such as Roku, Amazon Fire TV, and Apple TV, reaching a broader audience.

Closed Captioning and Language Options

- **Short-Term**: Implement AI for real-time captioning, automated transcription, and multilingual support across live broadcasts and recorded content.
- **1-3 Years**: Broaden accessibility features by expanding multi-language support and customizable captions.

5. Audience Engagement

Data-Driven Decisions

- **Short-Term**: Utilize analytics on the centralized platform to gather viewership data, guiding content creation based on viewer interests.
- **1-3 Years**: Use AI to analyze data trends for real-time programming optimization and personalize viewer recommendations.

Interactive Features

- **Short-Term**: Integrate interactive elements like Q&A sessions and live polls, encouraging audience participation.
- **1-3 Years**: Expand virtual town halls and add social media integration for enhanced viewer interaction.

6. Sustainability and Efficiency

Energy-Efficient Technologies

- Transition to energy-saving Light-Emitting Diode (LED) lighting and low-power equipment within the Community Media Center. Collaborate with e-waste recyclers for responsible disposal of outdated equipment, aligning with APTV's sustainability goals

Cost Management

- Leverage partnerships, donations, and community funding to supplement the $500,000 budget, optimizing costs without compromising on service quality

7. Cybersecurity and Compliance

Enhanced Cybersecurity Measures

- **Data Protection**: Use Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA), role-based access, and encryption for all sensitive data on the platform, ensuring secure access.
- **Network Security**: Deploy Intrusion Detection and Prevention Systems (IDPS) to monitor for potential threats and protect network integrity.
- **Intellectual Property (IP) Protections**: Implement Digital Rights Management (DRM) and watermarking tools to safeguard APTV's original content and ensure compliance with copyright laws.

- **Incident Response Plan**: Develop a robust incident response plan that includes protocols for data breaches, IP infringement incidents, and cybersecurity incidents, along with regular response drills
- **Access Control**: Use role-based access to control data visibility, protect sensitive information, and enforce permissions based on user roles.

8. Partnerships and Collaboration

Local Partnerships

- Collaborate with local tech companies, universities, and civic groups to drive technological innovation and community engagement, supporting co-branded educational content and community-based projects

Content Sharing

- Partner with public stations across the region to share and syndicate content, broadening APTV's reach and expanding programming diversity

9. Training and Development

Staff Training

- **Short-Term**: Develop a certification program and curriculum for camera operation, editing, and AI-assisted workflows, led by industry experts. These programs will incorporate best practices and be available both in-person and online.
- **1-3 Years**: Create an on-demand training portal with recorded sessions on emerging technologies, such as AI and 5G, ensuring continuous learning opportunities

Community Workshops

- **Short-Term**: Offer workshops on digital literacy, content creation, and smartphone video production to make APTV resources more accessible to the community

10. Future Technology Needs, Considerations, and Recommendations

5G and Beyond

- **1-3 Years**: Implement 5G for real-time mobile content access, supporting remote productions and interactive audience features like live polls.
- **5-10 Years**: Expand 5G use to support AR and immersive content, enhancing viewer engagement and interactivity

AI and Automation

- **Short-Term**: Use AI for scriptwriting, automated editing, tagging, and metadata management to streamline content workflows.
- **1-3 Years**: Expand AI applications for personalized content recommendations and data-driven programming decisions.
- **5-10 Years**: Explore AI-driven analytics and fully automated content scheduling to adapt dynamically to audience needs

11. Conclusion

APTV's phased approach to digital transformation will be driven by a centralized digital platform, comprehensive infrastructure, and AI integration, supported by strong community partnerships and inclusive audience engagement. By establishing a robust foundation, prioritizing viewer-centered content, and collaborating with local stakeholders, APTV will redefine its role as a trusted, accessible resource for Atlanta's communities.

This modernization plan also emphasizes civic empowerment through interactive meeting media, meeting-friendly spaces, and equitable access to technology resources, ensuring that all residents can actively participate in community discourse. With a focus on sustainability, cybersecurity, and governance through balanced control, APTV will set new standards for transparency and accessibility in public media.

12. Appendices **(for Technology)**

Appendix A: Detailed Equipment Lists

1. **Community Media Center**
    - **Main Production Studio and Control Room**: Estimated cost - $90,000
        - 3 Studio-Grade Cameras (traditional rear-control or remotely controlled PTZ cameras), and intercom systems.
        - Studio Lighting Grid with adjustable lighting
        - Teleprompter system for 2 cameras
        - Production Switcher, Audio Mixing Board, Recording Equipment
        - Graphics and Playback Systems
        - Network Device Interface (NDI) for seamless interconnection between equipment
        - Desktop Computers and Laptop for accessory control
        - Studio Production Software
    - **Editing Facilities**: Estimated cost - $30,000
        - 4 Desktop Editing Systems (Mac and PC) with Adobe Premiere, Final Cut Pro, and DaVinci Resolve
        - 2 Laptop Editing Computers
        - Central Edit Bay IT Storage with temporary storage capabilities
        - Small Audio Recording Area for voice-over work
        - Software Licensing and Support for Editing Software

- **Video Podcast Studio**: Estimated cost - $30,000
  - 3 PTZ or DSLR Cameras
  - Microphones and In-room Audio Control Surfaces
  - NDI Capabilities for connectivity with other studios
  - Desktop and Laptop for production, recording, and livestreaming
  - Lighting and Microphone Cabling
- **Radio Production Studio**: Estimated cost - $12,000
  - Professional Radio Broadcast Console, Microphones, Stands, Production Desk with Guest Seating
  - Desktop and Laptop for Production Control
  - 2 Mounted PTZ Cameras for Video Recording
  - Audio Production Software for traditional news/public affairs programming
- **Equipment for Public Check-Out**: Estimated cost - $60,000
  - Video Cameras (Canon XA65, Sony PXW-Z90, Panasonic HC-X1; DSLR cameras like Canon EOS R series)
  - Lenses (wide-angle, telephoto, and prime)
  - Audio Equipment (Shotgun Microphones, Wireless Lavalier Microphones, Handheld Microphones, Audio Mixers, Headphones)
  - Lighting Equipment (LED Panel Lights, Softbox Kits, Ring Lights, On-Camera Lights)
  - Stabilization and Support (Tripods, Monopods, Gimbals, Dollies)
  - Power Solutions (Battery Packs, Chargers)
  - Additional Accessories (External Monitors and Recorders, Memory Cards, Carry Cases, Video Switchers, Cables, and Adapters)
  - **Accessibility-Focused Equipment Lending**: Equipment available for community members with user-friendly check-out options (e.g., microphones and clickers can be borrowed like library books), enhancing accessibility for community events and productions.
- **Training Facilities**: Estimated cost - $10,000
  - Meeting Rooms for Workshops and Training Sessions
  - Online Training Portal for virtual sessions
- **Neighborhood Makerspaces**: Estimated cost per space - $12,000
  - Equipment for Local Video Editing and Community Engagement
  - Cameras, Laptops, and Audio Equipment for content creation

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Appendix B: Technical Specifications

1. **Bandwidth Requirements**
   - **Main Studio**: 1 Gbps symmetric bandwidth for high-definition streaming and media sharing.
   - **Satellite Offices**: 500 Mbps to support file access and remote editing.
2. **Centralized Digital Platform**
   - Cloud-based Media Asset Management (MAM) for content storage and access.
   - Workflow Automation Tools for approvals, quality checks, and distribution.

    - Integrated Website with viewer-facing on-demand content, schedule listings, and engagement tools.
3. **5G Connectivity and Cloud Workflows**
    - **MiFi 5G Devices**: Portable, high-speed internet access for remote production.
    - **5G Cloud Workflows**: Facilitates collaboration across locations, supports remote and mobile productions.
4. **Network Device Interface (NDI)**
    - Standardized connectivity across studios for device control and media sharing in a broadcast environment.
5. **Cybersecurity Measures**
    - Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) for user access.
    - Encryption for Data Protection, both in transit and at rest.
    - Intrusion Detection and Prevention Systems (IDPS) to monitor network traffic for breaches.
    - **Data Privacy Protocols**: Compliance with local, state, and federal regulations, including FCC standards.
    - **Content Rights Management**: Includes DRM and watermarking to protect intellectual property and monitor for IP violations across platforms.
6. **Automated Production and Accessibility Features**
    - **Automated Media Controls**: Automated meeting media controls reduce the need for operator expertise, enabling easier access for users of all skill levels.
    - **Open and Extensible Meeting Software**: Meeting software is designed to be open and extensible, allowing third-party developers to add functionality as needed, enhancing accessibility.
    - **Interactive and Web-Centric Meeting Media**: Provides interactive features such as voting, real-time engagement, and web-based remote participation options to ensure accessibility and inclusion for remote and diverse community members.
7. **IoT and Smart Broadcasting Capabilities**
    - **IoT-Enabled Equipment**: Smart cameras and environmental sensors for sound and video quality monitoring.
    - **Edge Computing**: For faster content delivery and real-time processing in remote locations.

Appendix C: Additional Resources and References

- **Training and Certification Programs**
    - **Certification Program**: Structured to ensure proficiency in equipment use, including camera operation, editing software, and broadcasting protocols.
    - **Specialist-Led Training**: Covers storytelling, editing, graphics, AI-assisted content creation, and 5G-enabled production workflows, available both virtually and in-person.
    - **On-Demand Training Portal**: An online platform offering recorded sessions on AI, 5G, and emerging technologies for continuous learning.
    - **Learning Management System (LMS) Subscription Options**:

        - 360Learning: $8/user/month for up to 100 users.
        - eFront: $1,200/month for up to 1,000 users.
    - **Budget for Training Staff**:
        - **Staff Costs**: Approximately $250,000 annually for a five-person team working 28 hours per week, with an average salary of $43,500 per person.
        - **Printed Materials**: $2,000 for guides and physical resources.
- **Roles and Responsibilities**
    - **Program Director**: Manages the educational program, including curriculum, partnerships, quality control, and budgeting.
    - **Lead Instructor**: Teaches core filmmaking concepts such as screenwriting, directing, cinematography, and editing, and mentors students.
    - **Additional Support Roles**: Includes a Production Coordinator, Student Advisor, and Marketing & Outreach Coordinator to facilitate program coordination and community engagement.
- **Local Partnerships and Collaboration Opportunities**
    - **Educational Institutions**: Internship and mentorship programs with local colleges for media-related training.
    - **Technology Partnerships**: Collaborate with local tech companies to pilot new media technologies for interactive, accessible and inclusive audience engagement.
- **Budget Breakdown for Community Media Center and Makerspaces**
    - **Total Initial Setup Estimate**: $244,000 - $300,000, depending on installation and setup requirements.
    - **Breakdown**:
        - Main Production Studio: $90,000
        - IT Infrastructure: $30,000
        - Video Podcast Studio: $30,000
        - Radio/Audio Studio: $12,000
        - Public Equipment Checkout: $60,000
        - Training Facilities: $10,000
        - Neighborhood Makerspaces: $12,000 each
- **Sustainability Initiatives**
    - **Energy-Efficient Equipment**: Use of LED lighting, low-power devices, and efficient audio/video equipment to minimize energy use.
    - **E-Waste Recycling**: Partner with certified recyclers to dispose of outdated electronics responsibly.
- **Future Technologies for Consideration**
    - **5G and Edge Computing**: Enhances real-time processing and reduces latency for remote content creation.
    - **Virtual and Augmented Reality (VR/AR)**: Pilots immersive content for community engagement and interactive programming.
    - **IoT for Smart Broadcasting**: IoT-enabled devices support remote monitoring, diagnostics, and automatic adjustments in broadcast quality.
- **Community Engagement Tools**
    - Establish a user-friendly website and possibly a mobile application to streamline content access and viewer engagement.

- **Mobile Application**: For live and on-demand streaming, viewer engagement, and feedback tools.
    1. **App Development:** A streaming service app may cost between $25,000 to $50,000, with an estimated average of $37,500.

        - **App Team:**
            1. **Project Manager:** Oversees the app's development and ensures alignment with project goals, reporting to the committee.
            2. **UI/UX Designer:** Focuses on creating an intuitive user experience.
            3. **Developer:** Handles front-end and back-end functionalities.
            4. **Quality Assurance (QA) Engineer:** Tests the app thoroughly for bugs and ensures a smooth launch.

- **Website Development**: Estimated at $10,000 for high-quality website development
    1. **Immediate Technological Needs:** Essential items include a domain name, hosting, and a web development platform (WordPress or Squarespace) to establish APTV's online presence.
    2. **Organizational Needs:**

        - **Web Team:**
            1. **Lead Developer/SEO Expert:** Manages the site's functionality and search optimization, reporting directly to the committee.
            2. **Graphic Designer and Layout Specialist:** Ensures an appealing and accessible site design.
            3. **Copywriter:** Crafts accurate, engaging content for the website.

- **Over-the-Top (OTT) Integration**: Expand content accessibility through Roku, Amazon Fire TV, and Apple TV.
- **Interactive Content**: Features AI-driven personalization, virtual town halls, live polls, and social media integration.