

BANKING/ FINANCE

T-Mobile-Sprint Merger Odds May Rise With Cable Move Into Mobile



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by Todd Shields
and Scott Moritz

Cable companies have begun offering mobile phone service, a trend that could ease the way for T-Mobile US Inc. and Sprint Corp. to merge.

That’s because regulators are more likely to approve the deal if they conclude there will still be sufficient competition if the third and fourth biggest mobile providers combine.

They are examining the idea. One of the regulators deciding whether to allow the merger, the Federal Communications Commission, this week asked the largest cable companies, Comcast Corp. and Charter Communications Inc., for details about their new mobile offerings.

“If anything this is a positive sign for the T-Mobile Sprint deal,” Amy Yong, an analyst with Macquarie, said in an interview. “It’s an option the FCC can point to as it serves its role in protecting consumers.”

The \$26.5 billion merger proposed in April would cut the number of nationwide wireless providers from four to three. A finding that cable companies such as Comcast and Charter offering wireless service are competitors would ease the path to approval by the FCC and antitrust regulators at the Justice Department.

Comcast, the largest U.S. cable provider, added a wireless offering for its customers last year and more than 780,000 of them already have signed up. Comcast uses Verizon Communications Inc.’s airwaves and 19 million Xfinity Wi-Fi hotspots to offer its mobile service, and No. 2 cable provider Charter also offers mobile service using Verizon airwaves. Smaller Altice USA has a deal to use Sprint’s airwaves and also got a query from the FCC this week about its phone service.

T-Mobile said in a filing that cable providers getting into the wireless business shows “the intensity of current competition in the sector.”

There are skeptics.

“Is Comcast selling service to anybody who’s not a Comcast video or broadband customer?” said Gene Kimmelman, a former antitrust official who is president of the policy group

Public Knowledge, which opposes the merger. “If they’re not trying to market to them, they’re not trying to grab them, that eliminates 80 million households that Sprint and T-Mobile compete for.”

Sena Fitzmaurice, a Washington-based spokeswoman for Comcast, declined to comment on the FCC’s request for information, as did Tina Pelkey, an FCC spokeswoman. Tara Darrow, a spokeswoman for Bellevue, Washington-based T-Mobile, didn’t reply to a request for comment.

The cable companies resell wireless service they get from Verizon at wholesale prices. Mobile phone services like Google’s Project Fi and TracFone Wireless Inc. also operate through similar deals with wireless carriers.

The arrangements are sometimes called virtual networks.

The FCC has traditionally not counted them as separate competitors from the networks that play host to them, saying the virtual networks don’t compete through network investments and upgrades, as do providers that own wireless towers and antennas.

“I seriously doubt it takes away the competitive concerns that have been raised,” Kimmelman said.

The FCC shouldn’t ignore the virtual networks, because the cable providers have the wherewithal to expand service, Michelle Connolly, a Duke University economics professor, said in a September report underwritten by T-Mobile.

Comcast and Charter will become “strong competitors” in part because they have an existing base of 57 million customers and fixed networks that pass almost an equal number, offering the possibility of expansion, Connolly said in the September report.

Comcast offers its wireless product, called Xfinity Mobile, as an add-on to customers that already take its internet service. The product works by using airwaves, and also using Wi-Fi signals emitted by Comcast gear in subscriber homes and businesses. The Philadelphia-based cable provider and Verizon agreed to the airwaves use in 2011, in a deal that also sent spectrum licenses to Verizon.

Todd Shields and Scott Moritz report for Bloomberg News.



CITY OF DORAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

All residents, property owners and other interested parties are hereby notified of a **City Council Hearing** on **Thursday, November 1, 2018, beginning at 6:00 PM**, to consider the following amendments to the City of Doral Public Arts Program established in Chapter 75, Article 1, Division 100 of the City’s Land Development Code. The City Council will consider this item for **Second Reading**. This meeting will be held at the **City of Doral, Government Center, Council Chambers** located at **8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, Florida 33166**.

The City of Doral proposes to adopt the following Ordinance:

ORDINANCE No. 2018-21

AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DORAL, FLORIDA, AMENDING CHAPTER 75, ARTICLE 1, DIVISION 100 “PUBLIC ARTS PROGRAM,” SECTION 75-104, “MEMBERSHIP IN THE ART PROGRAM ADVISORY BOARD” AND SECTION 75-107, “APPLICABILITY” OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE; PROVIDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

HEARING NO.: 18-09-DOR-03

APPLICANT: City of Doral

REQUEST: The City of Doral (The “Applicant”) is requesting Mayor and City Council approval of several amendments to the City of Doral Public Arts Program established in Chapter 75, Article 1, Division 100 of the Land Development Code.

Information relating to this request is on file and may be examined in the City of Doral, Planning and Zoning Department located at **8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, FL. 33166**. All persons are invited to appear at this meeting or be represented by an agent, or to express their views in writing addressed to the City Clerk, **8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, FL. 33166**. Maps and other data pertaining to these applications are available for public inspection during normal business hours in City Hall. Any persons wishing to speak at a public hearing should register with the City Clerk prior to that item being heard. Inquiries regarding the item may be directed to the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL.

Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes If a person decides to appeal any decisions made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. This notice does not constitute consent by the City for introduction or admission of otherwise inadmissible or irrelevant evidence, nor does it authorize challenges or appeals not otherwise allowed by law. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, all persons who are disabled and who need special accommodations to participate in this meeting because of that disability should contact the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL no later than three (3) business days prior to the proceeding.

NOTE: If you are not able to communicate, or are not comfortable expressing yourself, in the English language, it is your responsibility to bring with you an English-speaking interpreter when conducting business at the City of Doral during the zoning application process up to, and including, appearance at a hearing. This person may be a friend, relative or someone else. A minor cannot serve as a valid interpreter. The City of Doral DOES NOT provide translation services during the zoning application process or during any quasi-judicial proceeding.

NOTA: Si usted no está en capacidad de comunicarse, o no se siente cómodo al expresarse en inglés, es de su responsabilidad traer un intérprete del idioma inglés cuando trate asuntos públicos o de negocios con la Ciudad de Doral durante el proceso de solicitudes de zonificación, incluyendo su comparecencia a una audiencia. Esta persona puede ser un amigo, familiar o alguien que le haga la traducción durante su comparecencia a la audiencia. Un menor de edad no puede ser intérprete. La Ciudad de Doral NO suministra servicio de traducción durante ningún procedimiento o durante el proceso de solicitudes de zonificación.

Connie Diaz, CMC

City Clerk

City of Doral

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