

Municipal Broadband

A PUBLIC UTILITY FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT

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Broadband as Essential Infrastructure

- The majority of residents, visitors and businesses consider internet connectivity as a necessity, like roads or electricity, where community benefits outweigh investment costs.
- The COVID-19 pandemic deepened the “digital divide”, and underscored the importance of digital connectivity in education, healthcare, commerce, online social networks and more.
- The recent focus on developing broadband infrastructure for all is creating new opportunities in public and private sector financing, digital literacy, as well as affordability and reliability issues.

BROADBAND FOR ALL

....a priority for
City Council.

- 2020 Broadband Ad Hoc Committee formed to develop a roadmap to improve internet connectivity (Albin-Smith, Morsell-Haye), which was recently reinstated (Rafanan, Albin-Smith)
- July 2021 Governor Newsom signed \$6 billion on historic broadband legislation
- September 2021 Fort Bragg Digital Infrastructure Plan was presented to Council and staff directed to pursue funding
- August 2022 City applied for Local Agency Technical Assistance Program funding to cover pre-construction costs and was awarded \$479, 528
- October 2023 City applied for Federal Funding Account Program funds for construction (in process)
- February 2024 City Council considers applying for CDGB 2023 NOFA funding for construction (in process)

Status Updates

NETWORK DESIGN

- Design is 90% complete for an underground fiber to the premise network offering 100% of residences and businesses access to GB speeds
- Coordinating joint build along CA Route 1 with CDT and Caltrans. Construction scheduled for completion December 2024
- Considering potential conflict areas with existing utilities

BUSINESS MODEL

- In communication with MCN regarding ISP services
- Working through details of 10-year pro forma, take rate, services offered, staffing, etc.

Status Updates *continued...*

FINANCING STRATEGY

- GRANTS! Staff is currently preparing for and pursuing several broadband funding programs.
- \$1.7 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds are earmarked by City Council for broadband initiative.
- NHA Advisors are on contract to assist with valuation of cash flow modeling and budget implications

MARKETING STRATEGY

- Coordinating a focus group workshop to capture benefits of municipal broadband utility for various sectors of community (remote learning, telehealth, commerce, quality of life, etc.)

BROADBAND PROJECT TIMELINE

... is compressed
and complicated.

- Several funding sources are tied to American Rescue Plan Act dollars, which need to be obligated by December 2024, with project completion by December 2026
- Grant programs are designed to meet specific needs, which means that several different funding sources need to be weaved together. City may need to plan on financing portion while pursuing grant funding.
- CDBG 2023 NOFA funding announced January 31st with applications opening March 1st. In order to meet public hearing requirements for application, a notice for February 26th meeting has already been sent to the newspaper

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