

MOTION

The build-out of fifth-generation network connectivity (5G) presents an enormous opportunity to Los Angeles. 5G networks, once fully deployed, should be able to provide faster and more reliable connections. Average download speeds of around 1 Gigabyte per second are expected, and this may enable new technological applications. In recent years, the City has expended significant effort to assist telecommunications companies with building out the infrastructure required for 5G. The Bureau of Street Lighting (BSL) and the Bureau of Engineering (BOE) have both added staff to accommodate the increased requests from these companies, and the permitting throughput of the City has significantly increased.

These improvements may also exacerbate an existing digital divide within the City of Los Angeles. A 2017 study from the Annenberg Research Network on International Communication (ARNIC) found that more than 89% of residents have home broadband service in West Los Angeles and parts of the San Fernando Valley, while approximately only half of residents in East and South Los Angeles have such service. A third of low-income households lack home broadband service, and these households are more likely to rely exclusively on mobile service.

The City's previous effort to improve internet access, the CityLinkLA Project, established guiding principles. Among these were that Angelenos should be able to access advanced communications networks at an affordable price, the City should ensure that underserved areas receive service, and the City should ensure that every Angeleno can enjoy the benefits of broadband regardless of income or the area in which they reside.

To ensure all residents benefit from 5G technology, other jurisdictions, including San Jose, have recently launched Digital Inclusion Funds. These funds can be supported by a combination of philanthropic funding and fees municipalities charge for attaching wireless equipment on streetlights. These funds can then be used to provide grants to non-profits or funding to City departments for projects that improve internet access for City residents. BSL pole attachment fees present a potential revenue source for such a fund. Additional work is required to establish the parameters of the fund, including additional funding sources, the administrator of the fund, the disbursement of funds, eligible projects, and other considerations.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council instruct the City Administrative Officer, with the assistance of the Bureau of Street Lighting and the Information Technology Agency, to report on the feasibility of establishing a Digital Inclusion Fund to receive and disburse funds, including pole attachment fees, for the implementation of digital inclusion projects.

JUN 19 2018



tcp

PRESENTED BY:


 BOB BLUMENFELD
 Councilmember, 3rd District

SECONDED BY:



ORIGINAL