City of Hillsboro Commits to Affordable High-Speed Internet Access
Council supports expanding municipal fiber network to eventually serve entire community

Getting high-speed internet access in Hillsboro is about to become easier — and more affordable. The City of Hillsboro has committed to expanding its existing City-owned municipal fiber network to provide affordable high-speed internet access to Hillsboro residents, businesses, and nonprofits.

Currently, the City of Hillsboro's fiber network connects and serves City buildings, schools, local government organizations, and traffic signals. Two Hillsboro areas where need and opportunity are the greatest are targeted for the first phase of the fiber network's service expansion in 2019.

Southwest Hillsboro/Shute Park

The lowest-income area of Hillsboro has the greatest need for affordable internet service — and presents a prime opportunity for the City of Hillsboro to play a meaningful role in helping ensure equitable access for all residents. The City recently applied to designate this area as an Opportunity Zone for investments as recognized by state and federal governments. The City will target summer 2019 to begin providing municipal internet service in the Southwest Hillsboro/Shute Park neighborhoods.

South Hillsboro

This new development — the largest master-planned neighborhood in Oregon history — is the best opportunity to incorporate the City's fiber network infrastructure from its inception. Building out the network at such an early stage in the neighborhood's development presents the greatest potential cost efficiency of any area. The City will target spring 2019 to begin providing municipal internet service in the South Hillsboro neighborhood.

Key Reasons to Expand Hillsboro's Fiber Network
• Improved affordability for all customers
• Supporting students' success
• Equitable access for low-income residents
• Enhancing entrepreneurial opportunities
• Net neutrality protection
• Exceptional customer service

In addition to these Hillsboro neighborhoods, the City will continue to explore opportunities to expand service to the rest of Hillsboro as part of a multi-year phased buildout.

Initial financial modeling estimates a flat-rate target cost of around $50 per month for internet access with download and upload speeds of at least 1 gigabit per second. Low-income households could receive the same internet access with speeds of at least 1 gigabit per second for around $10 per month. These amounts are estimates and may be adjusted.

"For our students, for our businesses, and for our entire community, we are moving forward now to expand the City's fiber network to include internet service," said Hillsboro Mayor Steve Callaway.

"We want to ensure affordable, equitable high-speed access to keep Hillsboro competitive with cities around the world," Callaway continued.

The decision to expand Hillsboro's municipal fiber network follows the Hillsboro City Council's May 15 Work Session. Councilors voiced their support for the City's careful approach in eventually achieving equitable internet access for all Hillsboro community members — a process that could take more than a decade to realize.

"Being thoughtful and strategic is not only good governance, it's the Hillsboro way," Councilor Anthony Martin said. "Our neighbors will look forward to the day when our community's fiber network expands and the City can provide the exceptional customer service that Hillsboro residents expect."

As a municipal corporation, the City of Hillsboro has an established communications utility to serve as the administrative framework for connecting our community.

A recent code amendment enables the City to coordinate with public utilities and housing developers to ensure the installation of fiber network infrastructure — conduit, or pipe that can hold utility cables — whenever new or existing roads are dug up. This "dig once" strategy saves money and prevents digging up roads and sidewalks later.

An essential utility: High-speed internet access

High-speed internet access is an essential component of a balanced and thriving community. Like water, electricity, and other public utilities, Hillsboro residents and businesses will increasingly expect high-speed access to be reliable and affordable throughout our city.

Affordable high-speed internet access will make our community stronger. Hillsboro's homegrown talent — our students and entrepreneurs — will be better positioned to lead the world in innovating for the future. Hillsboro will continue to attract and retain talent as a hub for innovation and the center of Oregon's high-tech cluster.

Every neighborhood matters

The City of Hillsboro must consider the importance of equity. At a time when concerns about net neutrality raise questions about unrestricted access to internet content, our community also has an uneasy reliance on the commercial market to determine access and affordability.

Without high-speed access, community members are less informed and less equipped to thrive. Lower-income residents struggle to achieve internet and computer literacy. A level playing field requires equitable access to information so people can learn, obtain employment, care for their wellness, and participate in their community.

Communities are building fiber networks

Since 2014, the City of Hillsboro has been studying the more than 80 communities across America that have built high-speed fiber networks to serve residents and businesses. The community's need for affordable high-speed internet access has only grown in that time.

In Longmont, Colorado, residents can download an entire HD movie in mere seconds using the City's broadband fiber network at speeds of nearly 1 gigabit per second. Residents in cities that have built high-speed fiber networks can be more informed, engaged, and connected.

The City's high-speed fiber network could provide significant opportunities for additional innovations and services:

- Expanded public WiFi throughout the community
- Faster emergency notifications
- Real-time information from utility meters
- Real-time updates on traffic and parking spaces

*Stay informed about updates on the City of Hillsboro's progress in expanding the City-owned fiber network at **Hillsboro-Oregon.gov/News**.*