



DATE: December 13, 2016

CATEGORY: Consent

DEPT.: City Manager's Office

TITLE: **Authorization to Accept an \$800,000 Technology Grant from Google Inc. and Approve a Midyear Capital Improvement Project – Free Public WiFi in the Downtown Corridor**

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the City Manager to accept an \$800,000 technology grant from Google Inc. for installation and maintenance of free public WiFi in the downtown corridor and appropriate the funds in a new midyear Capital Improvement Project – Free Downtown Public WiFi. (Five votes required)

BACKGROUND

In 2014, Google Inc. (Google) provided a \$500,000 technology grant to the City which has been used for free Wifi in Rengstorff Park as well as City facilities and other public areas in the City. City staff and Google have discussed opportunities to bring free WiFi to the downtown corridor. As a result of these discussions, Google proposes to grant the City \$800,000 to develop free outdoor WiFi for use by the public in the downtown corridor (Attachment 1).

ANALYSIS

The importance of Internet connectivity increases daily. People connect to the Internet to communicate socially and professionally, conduct research, pay bills, stream videos, access directions, and a variety of other functions essential to modern life. Increased usage of smartphones and the expansion of mobile applications have heightened the Internet's use. The City, for example, is able to use the *Ask Mountain View* application to receive questions and concerns from citizens 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Despite the increased usage of smartphones and other Internet-capable devices, Internet access is not affordable for all Mountain View residents and visitors. Free WiFi in the downtown corridor will increase accessibility of the Internet for people of all incomes. Furthermore, free WiFi is an added incentive for people to patronize establishments in the downtown corridor.

The City will use the \$800,000 grant to plan, design, install, and operate a WiFi network in the downtown corridor for at least five years. The service area will be along Castro Street, between El Camino Real and Evelyn Avenue. An outside contractor will perform the work.

FISCAL IMPACT

Staff anticipates that the grant will cover all costs associated with installing and maintaining free public WiFi in the downtown corridor for five or more years.

ALTERNATIVES

The City Council could choose not to accept or appropriate a technology grant from Google or provide other direction.

PUBLIC NOTICING

Agenda posting and copies to Google, the Central Business Association, and the Chamber of Commerce.

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MEG/7/CAM
612-12-13-16CR-E

Attachment: 1. Letter from Google