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SOUTH BAY CITIES COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT’S COMPLETION OF HIGH-SPEED INTERNET INFRASTRUCTURE TO HELP USHER CITY FACILITIES THROUGH COVID-19 CHALLENGES; IMPROVE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION

TORRANCE, CALIF., November 17, 2020 – With the completion of a dedicated fiber-optic network in the South Bay region of Los Angeles County, city halls, along with other local and regional public agencies, will now benefit from high-speed, low-cost broadband connectivity that provides the critical infrastructure for South Bay Cities to boldly step into the world of “smart city” applications.

The new network, called the South Bay Fiber Network (SBFN), was made possible through a 15-city municipal partnership forged by the South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG). The new broadband infrastructure provides an essential public asset and resource to city governments as they manage economic viability during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond and creates opportunities to bridge the “digital divide” in communities underserved with broadband.

“The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated the importance of investing in the technology that makes telehealth, tele-education and telecommerce possible,” LA County Supervisor Janice Hahn and member of the SBCCOG Board of Directors, said. “By bringing a fiber network to our city halls, the South Bay has leaped ahead of the curve by creating the possibility of the eventual extension of a low-cost, comprehensive network to our residents and businesses throughout the South West Los Angeles region.”

By the end of 2020, SBCCOG member city halls, as well as a diverse community of public agencies, will be connected to the SBFN. These include Carson, El Segundo, Gardena, Hawthorne, Hermosa Beach, Inglewood, Lawndale, Lomita, Manhattan Beach, Palos Verdes Estates, Rancho Palos Verdes, Redondo Beach, Rolling Hills, Rolling Hills Estates and Torrance. The following public agencies will also benefit from access: Beach Cities Health District, the South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB), LA Metro Transportation Authority, Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, West Basin Municipal Water District and the Lundquist Institute for Biomedical Innovation, located at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center in Torrance.

Through an innovative collaboration, the SBCCOG funded the capital costs of the SBFN through use of \$6.9 million in Los Angeles Metro Measure M subregional transportation improvement funds. Use of the funding for IT infrastructure was a creative application of these public funds, which are typically targeted for road improvements.

“Working together as one entity to pay for the capital costs of the infrastructure, the SBCCOG members were able to collectively pay substantially less for world-class, secure, broadband and internet service than individual cities would have paid separately.” Olivia Valentine, chair, SBCCOG board of directors and City of Hawthorne councilmember, said. “By laying this groundwork, cities and the other participating agencies will be able to provide more effective services to their constituents online and reduce trips, saving time and greenhouse gas emissions.”

The genesis of the SBFN began in 2016 as an economic development issue, following the departure of South Bay companies who cited a lack of sufficient broadband infrastructure to meet their needs.

A two-year study by Magellan Advisors, commissioned by the South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB) with additional funding from 2nd district Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley Thomas' office, and administered by the SBCCOG, detailed this issue. It identified the challenges local governments face by spending “too much for too little IT service.”

The study resulted in a SBCCOG RFP to find out if there were opportunities to lower the costs and prepare South Bay cities for their future needs.

“We immediately recognized the value of high-speed broadband as a major economic driver for the South Bay region,” Jan Vogel, executive director and chief executive officer, South Bay Workforce Investment Board, said looking back. “As ‘Silicon Beach’ continues its migration south from Santa Monica/Playa del Rey into El Segundo and beyond, a high-speed broadband infrastructure is critical to sustaining a viable high-tech job market immediately and as we transition to a post-COVID-19 world.”

The SBWIB's headquarters and six satellite offices located throughout the South Bay region will connect to the network to support remote employment training and development programs.

SBFN enables local municipalities and other public agencies to access a secure, high-speed, 1 gigabyte (GB) network at a rate of \$1,000 per month, roughly half the cost of what commercial rates might be for similar service in the South Bay.

The new network is also scalable to accommodate future geographic expansion and data growth and provides a platform for the following examples of “smart city” applications:

- **Work-from-Home Governments** – High speed internet will support cities’ accelerated transition to telework through COVID-19 and beyond, and the evolution to “smart city halls” that can provide virtual municipal services and interactive distance learning to residents, with outcomes of reduced traffic and greenhouse gas emissions through “trips not taken.” Enhanced online services will be available to their residents, such as permitting and processing applications.
- **Improved Traffic Management** – Real-time traffic information from LA County’s Information Exchange Network (IEN) will be available for each participating agency. In partnership with Metro’s Regional Integration of Intelligent Transportation Systems (RIITS), South Bay cities will be able to combine and share transportation data as a resource for congestion management, improved transit services, and support of transportation demand management (TDM) programs.
- **Future Autonomous Vehicle (AV) Support** – High speed and resilient broadband capacity will be necessary for vehicle-to-network and vehicle-to-vehicle communications for a safe and reliable AV transportation system.
- **Telehealth and Telemedicine Opportunities** – Applications include remote diagnostics, video appointments, transmission of large files, such as MRIs, scans, etc., initially to be utilized by Beach Cities Health District and Lundquist Institute for Biomedical Innovation, with possible future expansion to other health care providers.

Additional benefits of low-cost broadband to participating agencies include the following:

- Greater resiliency for IT services, useful for emergency preparedness and data back up
- Efficient use of cloud-based software applications for day-to-day business
- Necessary IT capacity for future video and audio-based municipal software applications
- Sharing of municipal software platforms with other public agencies, including
 - Online permitting or applications with Los Angeles County
 - Sub-regional geographic information system geographic information system (GIS) mapping tools with other cities and SBCCOG
- The opportunity for cities to install municipal Wi-Fi in public spaces, parks and buildings
- Future expansion of broadband infrastructure for commercial and residential use

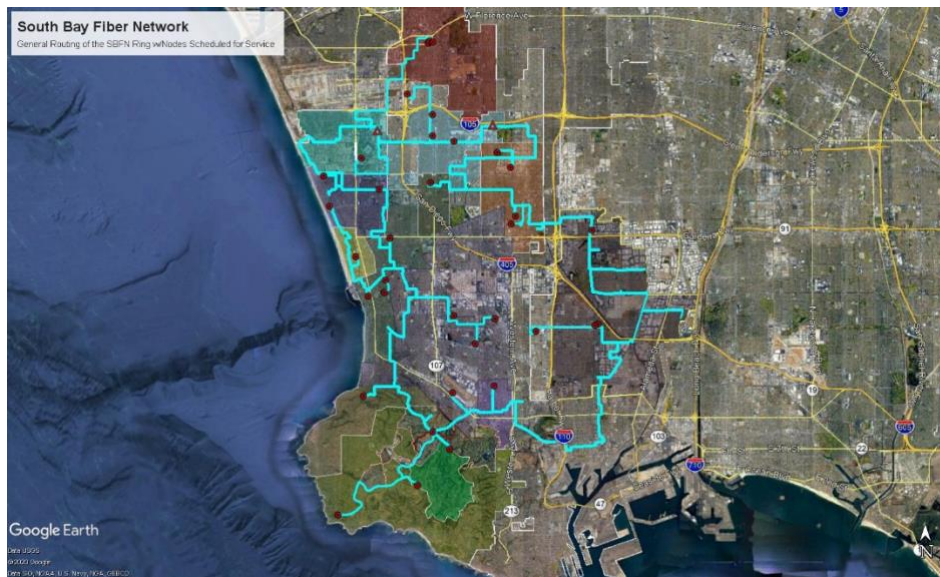
In 2019, American Dark Fiber was awarded the contract to build the network. Its architectural design features a middle-mile “fiber ring” that connects to the world wide web at two local data centers. A scalable two-fiber GB network provides bidirectional resiliency and security for SBFN members, once connected to the ring.

Construction of the project’s “fiber ring” and initial lateral connections to public agencies’ sites has been underway for the last nine months. The core ring became operational in August 2020. A total of 22 sites are now connected and running on the network, with another dozen sites planned for service over the next few months.

Gardena-based HP Communications is completing the physical construction of the network, while Race Communications is providing the fiber optic electronic equipment and customer service as the SBFN’s internet service provider.

“Our goal with the South Bay Fiber Network is to drive digital literacy across the South Bay and to empower those who need it most,” Dave Daigle, CEO, American Dark Fiber, said. “This infrastructure lays the groundwork for better quality of life for residents and businesses in the South Bay for years to come.”

An example of a South Bay community already benefitting from the network is a day care program offered at Gardena’s Rowley Park for children of city employees and essential workers. Using a 1GB transport circuit from City Hall to upgrade connectivity at the park, the city can now provide enhanced Wi-Fi service to support virtual classes and other interactive web-based programs for participants.



For more information about the South Bay Fiber Network visit <https://www.southbaycities.org/programs/south-bay-fiber-network>.

ABOUT SOUTH BAY CITIES COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS:

SBCCOG is a joint powers government agency of 15 cities and the County of Los Angeles that share the goal of maximizing the quality of life and productivity of the area. Within this structure, cities and Los Angeles County maintain the qualities and characteristics that make them unique and independent, while also coming together collectively to address issues of common interest for a greater good of the communities – partnership, persuasion, performance and advocacy. For more information about the SBCCOG visit <http://southbaycities.org>.

ABOUT AMERICAN DARK FIBER:

ADF IS A California certified telecommunications service provider (a CLEC) based in Los Angeles that develops fiber-based networks throughout the State. ADF designs, engineers, and constructs networks with a mission to bring more broadband to more places to benefit more people. For more information about ADF visit www.americandarkfiber.com.

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