



Legislation Text

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Report regarding a resolution approving a Professional Services Agreement with SmartWAVE Technologies to build a Community Wi-Fi Network in the Oldtown area of South San Francisco. (*Tony Barrera, Director of Information Technology*)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adopting a resolution authorizing a Professional Services Agreement with SmartWAVE Technologies to build a Community Wi-Fi Network in the low to moderate income Oldtown area of South San Francisco in the amount not to exceed \$709,893 and a total project budget of \$780,882 and authorize the City Manager to execute the professional services agreement, including utilization of the Tucson, Arizona cooperative purchasing contract.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

During the COVID-19 pandemic the country was faced with unprecedented lock downs, forcing employees to work from home, and students to learn through virtual classes. This highlighted the digital divide between those with reliable internet service and those who are under-served or unconnected. In response, the City extended the free Public Wi-Fi network to Westborough Park, Linden Avenue Corridor between Railroad and Armour Avenue, and continued to maintain the downtown Grand Avenue County Wi-Fi network. The City also created a Technology Assistance Program offering 400 free laptops, and 1-year internet service to low income residents; and promoted and assisted residents to sign up for the Affordable Connectivity Program which offers \$30 per month toward internet service. And lastly, staff released a Request for Proposal (RFP) to hire a consultant to conduct a Broadband and Wireless Feasibility Study.

On February 19, 2022, the consultant presented the Feasibility Study to the City Council where it was recommended the City construct a free pilot Public Wi-Fi Network in the Oldtown area of the City. This recommendation was approved by City Council.

To implement the Council approved plan for the new Public Wi-Fi Network, the Information Technology Department recommends utilizing a Cooperative Purchasing Agreement for the wireless installation and equipment from the City of Tucson, Arizona. According to SSF Municipal Code Section 4.04.040(b), the City may “piggyback” off an existing contract, if the contract terms are valid and have been negotiated by another governmental agency using a quote or bid process that substantially conforms to the procedures established by state law and the City purchasing ordinance. Furthermore, the City’s purchasing policy requires the bid process on the piggybacked contract to have been completed within the last year. The City Attorney has reviewed the Cooperative Purchase Contract structure used by the wireless consultant and found it consistent with City’s purchasing procedures.

The Cooperative Purchase Contract used is listed below:

Contract: 120558-01

1. Bidding Agency: City of Tucson, Arizona

2. Contract Date: February 13, 2023

After reviewing the list of contractors, staff selected SmartWAVE to construct the Wi-Fi network. SmartWAVE is an experienced business with a focus on creating open Wi-Fi networks for cities. One of their most notable projects was the construction of the City of Oakland's OAKWIFI Network. This network is the second largest mesh Wi-Fi network in the United States and offers over 10,000 connections per month to residents. Additionally, they built public Wi-Fi networks for San Mateo County and the City of San Jose.

The following illustration depicts the network coverage area which is in both district 3 and district 5. The scope of work requires the network to extend throughout the Oldtown area which is deemed low to moderate-income based on the census bureau data.



SmartWAVE will install 105 Wi-Fi access points, and wireless backhaul equipment on PG&E and City poles with internet speeds capable of 100Mbps symmetrical download and upload. The network will extend 117 city blocks and provide internet service of 10Mb symmetrical speeds to over 12,000 residents in the area. This Wi-Fi service will provide basic internet access which can be used for virtual meetings, online classes, and career resources for job seekers.

SmartWAVE provided a quote based on the cooperative purchasing agreement. The cost of the equipment and installation is \$709,893. This includes equipment, installation, two-year maintenance, monitoring and response to repair any connectivity issues. In addition to the equipment and installation costs, staff recommends adding an additional 10% contingency to cover unforeseen project costs.

The total project cost, including 10% contingency, is \$780,882. The not-to-exceed amount under the contract is \$709,893. Staff requests the Council to approve the contract amount and also authorize a total budget of \$780,882 including the 10% contingency.

Challenges:

The Wi-Fi equipment will be installed on 76 PG&E poles and will use shared power. PG&E requires the City to submit paperwork outlining equipment requirements, power usage and identifying the poles that will be used. Staff has submitted the necessary paperwork and is waiting for PG&E to approve the project. At this time there is no estimated time frame for when the project will be approved. The professional services agreement will be contingent upon PG&E approval and the contractor will not order the equipment until authorized.

FISCAL IMPACT

In the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the City Council approved using \$700,000 from infrastructure reserves and \$300,000 from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant funds to build a pilot Wi-Fi network in the Oldtown areas of the city. There are sufficient funds set aside for the project.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Building a free Community Wi-Fi Network will contribute to the City's Strategic Plan under Priority #2 Quality of Life by providing basic internet service.

RACIAL AND SOCIAL EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Equity and/or inclusion was considered in providing free Wi-Fi internet in the Old Town area as follows.

The free Community Wi-Fi Network is designed to provide basic internet service to the low to moderate income families in South San Francisco. According to the 2022 census bureau data Old Town consists of 12,296 residents, 61.3% Hispanic Origin with a per capita income of \$33,000. Providing this service would benefit residents without internet access to search for jobs, pay bills online and connect to online classes.

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the digital divide throughout the country. Building a Community Wi-Fi Network will provide basic internet access to students, job seekers and unconnected residents of the City. It is recommended the City Council approve the SmartWAVE Technologies Professional Services Agreement to build the Wi-Fi Network, and authorize the City to utilize the Tucson, Arizona cooperative purchasing contract.

Attachment: South Francisco Community Wi-Fi.pdf