



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND  
CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:**  
Vice Mayor Chappie Jones

**SUBJECT: 3.3 Update on Digital Access and Inclusion for Schools during COVID-19**

**DATE:** April 20, 2020

Approved

Date 4/20/2020

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Accept staff report and add the following:

- A. Direct staff to work with Santa Clara County Office of Education to:
  - 1. Identify the most heavily concentrated areas where digital connectivity is unavailable and students are unable to access education,
  - 2. Locate sites, such as schools and parks, where a range of connectivity solutions, including Rapid Deployment Sites, and other technologies may be deployed.
- B. Direct staff to explore and determine appropriate short-term solutions for bridging the gap in connectivity until long-term solutions are identified.
- C. Direct staff to locate funding sources, including those reserved for digital inclusion grants for rapid connectivity solutions to bring access to unconnected areas as quickly as possible.
- D. Allow the City Manager to negotiate with Joint Venture and telecom companies to enter into an agreement to deploy a range of rapid connectivity solutions, such as rapid deployment of Telco programs and infrastructure and standing up Rapid Deployment Sites, in areas identified as highest need.
- E. Direct staff to return to Council April 27 with an update on the progress of the aforementioned direction.

## **BACKGROUND**

One of many repercussions of the current COVID-19 pandemic is the stark contrast between those who are digitally connected, and those who are not. I acknowledge the dedication of our staff to assist in vital community services and aide. I bring this proposal forward not to diminish or detract from the valiant efforts our City has underway, but to address the pressing need for digital access.

We must acknowledge the thousands of households that still remain entirely unserviceable during this time when internet connectivity is more crucial than ever for education, work, information and socialization. As staff continues to explore long term solutions to address city-wide connectivity, we must turn our attention to short-term solutions during the current crisis. In working hand-in-hand with telecom companies over the past week, my district was able to sign up over 65 households for affordable internet. But what about those areas of San Jose that are unconnected entirely and do not have an option for internet connectivity? By working alongside experts, telecom companies, and our County and School Board counterparts, we can implement Rapid Deployment Sites (RDS) and other solutions to connect these households during this crisis, so long as we are fast-acting and strategic in our approach.

I request that staff, either independently or through the use of a consultant such as Joint Venture Silicon Valley, identify the most concentrated areas of need, determine funding sources so that we may reach as many of these areas as feasible, and allow the City Manager control to execute these agreements as rapidly as they may be available.

We cannot forget that every day that goes by where a child doesn't have access to an education, is a day that is lost forever. San Jose, the heart of Silicon Valley, has always been a leader in digital equity. Thousands of citizens are looking to us right now for their basic needs and, in 2020, that includes reliable internet connectivity.

*The signers of this memorandum have not had, and will not have, any private conversation with any other member of the City Council, or that member's staff, concerning any action discussed in the memorandum, and that each signer's staff members have not had, and have been instructed not to have, any such conversation with any other member of the City Council or that member's staff.*