



**CITY OF SALINAS
COUNCIL STAFF REPORT**

DATE: FEBRUARY 21, 2023
DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC WORKS, TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION DIVISION
FROM: DAVID JABOCS, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR
BY: ANDREW EASTERLING, TRAFFIC ENGINEER
TITLE: LOCAL AGENCY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT
ACCEPTANCE

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

A motion to approve a Resolution to:

- 1) Authorize the City Manager to execute all agreements and any required documents with the California Public Utilities Commission for the Local Agency Technical Assistance Grant Program;
- 2) Authorize the acceptance of Local Agency Technical Assistance Grant funds in the amount of \$470,304; and
- 3) Authorize the establishment of a Special Const Assist – Fed & St Fund appropriation totaling \$470,304 and corresponding revenue budget for the Alisal Broadband Strategic Plan with no matching funds required.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City of Salinas City Council approved Resolution No. 21731 on November 5, 2019, accepting the Alisal Vibrancy Plan as a key strategic planning document. A goal within the Alisal Vibrancy Plan is to improve internet capabilities. The Local Agency Technical Assistance (LATA) grant program provides funding to assist California’s local agencies and tribes in their efforts to provide high-speed broadband to unserved Californians. The City of Salinas applied for and has been awarded \$470,304 of grant funds to develop the Salinas Broadband Master Plan and Alisal Neighborhood Broadband Fiber Network Design. Staff recommends the City Council approve the acceptance of the grant funds and authorize the City Manager to execute all grant agreements and any amendments.

BACKGROUND:

The Alisal Vibrancy Plan (AVP, Attachment 1) was the result of years of visioning, community organizing, and relationship building between the City of Salinas and Alisal residents. The AVP’s purpose is to communicate the collective vision, goals and desires of those who live, work, and shop in the Alisal. Over 2,000 residents and community stakeholders participated in a community-

led engagement process that resulted in more than 150 strategies. Community recommendations evolved into goals, policies and actions that are documented as implementation actions in the final Alisal Vibrancy Plan. Several goals within the Transportation and Infrastructure related to improving internet capabilities. Specifically, goals T3.1c, T3.1d, and T3.1e, shown below, describe implementation actions for the City to perform in order to fulfill community identified needs.

- **TI 3.1.c – Improve Internet Capabilities.** Work with internet service and utility providers to improve broadband internet connectivity and speeds in the Alisal. Partner with non-profits or similar groups to provide reduced cost or free access to low-income residents and businesses.
- **TI 3.1.d - Promote and expand free WIFI zones.** Improve wireless internet speed and free accessibility at City facilities and schools.
- **TI 3.1.e – Install Dark Fiber.** After completing the fiber network from Hartnell College to the new Public Safety Building along West Alisal Street, continue installing the network along East Alisal Street to the Hartnell College Alisal Campus.

On February 24, 2022, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) approved Decision 22-02-026 (Attachment 2) which established the LATA grant program and implemented current requirements and guidelines for the program. The LATA grant program provides funding to assist California cities and tribes in their efforts to provide high-speed broadband to unserved Californians. The grant program provides reimbursement for pre-construction expenses that facilitate development of broadband network deployment projects to areas in need. Grants may be used to reimburse eligible costs such as environmental, feasibility, and engineering design studies or reports, needs assessments, market studies, broadband strategic plans, and business plans, forming a joint powers authority, and consultant and community-based organization services.

The City of Salinas submitted a grant application for the Salinas Broadband Master Plan and Alisal Neighborhood Broadband Fiber Network Design. The scope of work would include network design services for priority areas in and around unserved/underserved areas within the City of Salinas. The network design process will include engineering drawings and standard specifications for the City's fiberoptic network for a constructible network design that is shovel-ready and for a priority unserved/underserved area. The project will determine cost estimations for budgeting and planning purposes. The project will develop an implementation strategy. This project will be completed well within the 24-month timeline. The City was selected to be awarded \$470,304 in grant funds to develop the plan.

CEQA CONSIDERATION:

Not a Project. The City of Salinas has determined that the proposed action is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378). In addition, CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 includes the general rule that CEQA applies only to activities which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a

significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. Because the proposed action and this matter have no potential to cause any effect on the environment, or because it falls within a category of activities excluded as projects pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378, this matter is not a project. Because the matter does not cause a direct or foreseeable indirect physical change on or in the environment, this matter is not a project. Any subsequent discretionary projects resulting from this action will be assessed for CEQA applicability.

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

The LATA Grant Acceptance for the Salinas Broadband Master Plan and Alisal Neighborhood Broadband Fiber Network Design supports the City Council’s Goals of “Economic Development” and “Infrastructure and Environmental Sustainability”.

DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:

The grant acceptance for the Salinas Broadband Master Plan will be developed by Public Works in close coordination with Community Development and Information Technology Division. The Finance Department will assist in the use of grant funds.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

There is no impact to the General Fund. The grant amount is \$470,304 and the City is not responsible for any matching funds. Staff recommends the establishment of a Special Const Assist – Fed & St Fund appropriation totaling \$470,304 and corresponding revenue budget with no matching funds required.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Resolution
- Attachment 1: Alisal Vibrancy Plan
- Attachment 2: Decision (D.) 22-02- 026