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City of San Jose and East Side Union High School District Launch Pilot Project to Deploy a Free WiFi Network for ESUHSD Families

San José, Calif. – The San José City Council authorized the pilot deployment of a free WiFi network serving East Side Union High School District (ESUHSD) families on Tuesday, September 20. The project is the result of a partnership between the city and district, with the goal of connecting more underserved and low-income students in San José with affordable broadband internet service.

“Every child deserves the opportunity to thrive in school, and we know that connecting students to reliable high-speed internet access can significantly enhance their chances of academic success,” said Mayor Sam Liccardo. “This project represents our first step towards achieving our vision of ensuring that all of our low-income families have access to free or low-cost broadband internet service.”

Through the partnership, the city will construct the free network and manage the installation and ongoing maintenance through a city contractor. The school district will be responsible for managing registration, providing passcodes, and offering support to help ESUHSD students and their families access the free WiFi network. To fund the project, ESUHSD has allocated \$2.7 million from its 2014 general obligation technology bond measure.

“I’m extremely excited about this partnership between ESUHSD and the City of San José to leverage our resources in order to provide wireless internet access to our East Side families,” said Chris Funk, Superintendent of East Side Union High School District. “We are changing the paradigm of teaching and learning, and demonstrating true collaboration among two public entities.”

The City of San José and ESUHSD will immediately begin work on the initial WiFi network deployment in partnership with SmartWAVE Technologies. This first deployment will take place in one of three high school attendance areas: James Lick High School, William C. Overfelt High School, or Yerba Buena High School. The specific high school attendance area will be chosen following a site survey to assess the technical feasibility of deploying a network in that area.

The project was also heralded by the three City Councilmembers who represent the three attendance areas targeted for the first phase of the project:

“Far too many of our East San José youth and families lack inexpensive high-speed internet, and rely on our libraries, community centers, and on cell phones to access online educational resources,” said Councilmember Magdalena Carrasco. “My hope is that we can push WiFi into the homes of our students and open up new windows for more families first through this pilot and then extend it.”

"I hope that this effort will serve as a first step to closing the digital divide and helping more residents, including working families, to keep up with the important news, information and resources from city hall and beyond," said Councilmember Tam Nguyen.

"We are in the Capital of Silicon Valley," said Vice Mayor Rose Herrera, "And in the Capital of Silicon Valley we should expect that all students have access to the internet in order to prepare for their future and the future of our community. With this deployment of a free WiFi network to our ESUHSD families and students, we are taking the right steps toward producing a well-educated workforce for the 21st century."

This initial pilot deployment will also be used as a test case that will allow the city and school district to evaluate potential options for expanding the network to additional attendance areas in the future. This aligns with both the district's long-term goal to expand wireless access to all of its attendance areas as well as the San José Smart City Vision to ensure that all residents have access to affordable high-speed internet access.

"Our partnership with the district show what we can accomplish when we work together for common goals," said San José City Manager Norberto Dueñas. "By combining our strengths, our resources, and our vision we can better help students and their families achieve success in this digital age."

The city and district are targeting mid-2017 to launch the network in the first attendance area.

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About East Side Union High School District

East Side Union High School District, established in 1950, serves more than 23,000 students in grades 9-12 in San Jose, Santa Clara County (Silicon Valley). It has the seventh largest high school student enrollment in the state and the largest in northern California. The district's mission is to align decisions to create safe, dynamic and relevant learning environments that inspire critical thinking, problem solving and innovation. www.esuhsd.org

About City of San José

Known as the Capital of Silicon Valley, San José is the nation's tenth largest city, and the largest city in Northern California, with an ethnically diverse population of more than one million. San José was founded in 1777, once served as the state capital of California, and now encompasses 180 square miles. Facts about San José can be found here: <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/780>. The City's website is www.sanjoseca.gov.

About San José's Smart City Vision

Through Mayor Liccardo's Smart City Vision, San Jose is embracing new technologies, public-private partnerships and its innovative community to improve safety, city services and quality of life. In doing so, it can improve safety, city services and quality of life, while reducing costs. Learn more at: <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/index.aspx?NID=5001>.