



STAFF REPORT

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11/25/2025

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**AGENDA ITEM**

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR  
AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**FROM: CARLO TOMAINO  
CITY MANAGER**

**BY: GABINO LUNA  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS**

**SUBJECT: RIGHT-OF-WAY USE AGREEMENT WITH THE GATEWAY CITIES COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS FOR INSTALLATION, MAINTENANCE, AND OPERATION OF THE GATEWAY CITIES REGIONAL FIBER OPTIC NETWORK**

Summary:

The Gateway Cities Council of Governments (GCCOG) partnered with the California Department of Technology (CDT) and secured a \$46.1 million grant from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to construct the Gateway Cities Regional Fiber Optic Network (GCRFON). The project would install fiber infrastructure within the public rights-of-way of participating cities, including Signal Hill, with the intent to improve broadband access, reliability, and affordability throughout the Gateway region.

The proposed Right-of-Way (ROW) Use Agreement between the City and the GCCOG would authorize the installation, operation, and maintenance of the Gateway Cities Regional Fiber Optic Network within City rights-of-way and grant the City the right to use two strands of dark fiber for municipal purposes. If approved by the City Council, the GCCOG would be responsible for maintaining the City's fiber strands throughout the network's useful life. The GCCOG is working on other aspects of this project and has not yet secured an Internet Service Provider or provided an estimate of ongoing cost to staff; this information will become available once the GCCOG receives proposals from qualified providers.

Strategic Plan Goal(s):

Goal No. 4 Infrastructure: Maintain and improve the City's physical infrastructure, water system, and recreational spaces.

Recommendation:

1. Discuss the proposed Right-of-Way Use Agreement with the Gateway Cities Council of

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Governments for the installation, maintenance, and operation of the Gateway Cities Regional Fiber Optic Network and provide direction to staff as desired; and

2. Subject to City Council direction, authorize the Mayor to execute the Agreement and the City Manager, or designee, to administer the Agreement, approve finalized design plans, and take any other actions necessary to implement the Agreement.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no immediate fiscal impact associated with the recommended action. If the City Council approves the Right-of-Way Use Agreement, the GCCOG would construct, operate, and maintain the fiber network at its own expense, while the City would be responsible for the equipment, electronics, and connections required to utilize its two (2) dedicated dark fiber strands. The GCCOG will initiate a Request for Proposals process to select an Internet Service Provider to operate the network. The proposed future network would be governed by the 24 participating cities (including Signal Hill), although the governance structure has yet to be determined. The City expects there will be ongoing operating costs for the network and will inform the City Council of the potential ongoing fiscal impact at a later date.

Background:

The GCCOG secured approximately \$46.1 million in grant funding from the CPUC and entered into a Joint Build Agreement with the CDT to design and construct the Gateway Cities Regional Fiber Optic Network (GCRFON), which is a \$103 million regional broadband initiative. The purpose of the project is to expand digital connectivity and affordability throughout the Gateway region by building a shared high-capacity fiber backbone that connects member cities, improves competition among Internet Service Providers, and enhances network reliability for public agencies and communities. The GCCOG intends to establish a publicly owned, open-access fiber network that will serve as critical infrastructure for municipal operations, emergency communications, and economic development. The GCCOG proposes to construct, operate, and maintain the network within City rights-of-way, while the City would be responsible for electronics and equipment necessary to utilize its fiber connection.

Analysis:

The proposed Right-of-Way Use Agreement establishes the framework under which the GCCOG would install, operate, and maintain the GCRFON within Signal Hill's public rights-of-way. The project alignment follows Cherry Avenue from Spring Street to 19th Street, with a short lateral extension along Hill Street to City Hall. To reduce construction impacts, the GCCOG would utilize existing City of Long Beach conduits within Signal Hill, thereby avoiding disruption to the current pavement or roadway surfaces. The GCCOG proposes to coordinate design, inspection, and restoration activities and ensure compliance with City standards. Under the proposed Agreement, the City would have access to two strands of dark fiber for municipal use. The new strands could create a potential foundation for future technology upgrades.

Given that the GCCOG is primarily focused on securing access rights to the public-right-of-way at this time, it does not yet have estimates regarding the expected ongoing service costs. The GCCOG has also not yet secured an ISP to "light" the regional network. The GCCOG plans to initiate a Request for Proposals process to select an Internet Service Provider to operate the network. As

noted, the City would be responsible for electronics and equipment necessary to utilize its fiber connection. Staff will update the City Council regarding potential costs based on the outcome of the selection process.

Additionally, the final operational structure and cost-sharing arrangements are still being developed and may or may not affect how the City connects to and uses the fiber. Likewise, the proposed Agreement's maintenance provisions apply primarily to construction and installation. Once the GCCOG retains an Internet Service Provider or network operator, a separate agreement will further define the scope of maintenance responsibilities. Staff will continue to participate in the process to clearly define any future obligations before implementation and assess ongoing costs to ensure the proposed project provides a public benefit to the City.

Construction activity within Signal Hill would be for coordination and minor connection work within established utility corridors. The GCCOG would provide the City with construction schedules, traffic control plans, and as-built drawings within sixty (60) days of project completion. Public Works staff would serve as the primary point of contact to ensure minimal community disruption and adherence to City standards. At this time, staff is seeking City Council direction regarding the proposed execution of the agreement.

CEQA Exemption:

The GCCOG, acting as the Lead Agency, determined that the project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Public Resources Code §21080.51 and CEQA Guidelines Sections 15301, 15302, 15303, and 15304. City staff concurs that the project qualifies for exemption because it will occur entirely within existing rights-of-way, utilize previously installed conduit, and involve only minor trenching or backfilling where necessary.

Reviewed for Fiscal Impact:

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Siamlu Cox  
Administrative Services Officer/Finance Director

Attachment:

A. Right-of-Way Use Agreement