Palo Alto Fiber

Ambassador Toolkit

Summary

The City of Palo Alto is offering this toolkit to support community member engagement on the Palo Alto Fiber effort. Notably, seeking input and feedback on this project and encouraging community conversations to take place to help inform City Council considerations and next steps on this initiative.

An Ambassador for the Palo Alto Fiber project refers to a person who wants to take an active role in supporting, promoting, and encouraging other community members to learn about, get involved, and share their support for Palo Alto Fiber implementation. This toolkit serves as a resource for community members who wish to take on an active role during the City's community conversations phase of the Palo Alto Fiber effort. Information includes tips for organizing and hosting neighbor to neighbor meetings, ways to engage community networks and businesses into the conversation.

This is a living document that will be enhanced as the project and community engagement progresses. We'd love to hear your feedback! If you have other ideas of useful tools or tips to include in this toolkit, please email fiber@cityofpaloalto.org.

Consider using this toolkit to support your community engagement ideas. The City looks forward to the community discussions as they evolve on this effort.

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Quick Links

Palo Alto Fiber Hub Site

Palo Alto Fiber Project Page

City of Palo Alto Website

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Connect

Conducting Neighborhood Outreach

Conducting neighborhood outreach is a great way to stay connected with new and current neighbors. During this challenging time, the City is encouraging the community to stay connected while staying safe and this effort could be just what you need to get out in the community, share details on your walk through your neighborhood and more. Here are some steps to help support your outreach goals:

1. Identify people who can help

2. Conduct a door-to-door walking campaign of your neighborhood to:

    a. Inform residents about the Palo Alto Fiber project. Provide interested community networks with frequently asked questions and a flyer with website information. For Palo Alto Fiber FAQs, go to Page 11.

    b. Invite interested community members to a neighborhood meeting or to get involved online.

    c. Identify other potential ambassadors.

3. Network with the Palo Alto Neighborhood Associations

4. Involve and reach out to key stakeholders you think are vital to know about this effort

5. Connect with local parent groups, book clubs, and other community-based groups

Post Information at Local Hotspots

Coffee shops, local grocery stores and businesses typically have an events board or poster board where people may hang informational brochures. Spending an hour going to a few small businesses in your neighborhood and hanging flyers will increase awareness of the project, events, meetings, or other

ways to connect with community members. Don't forget! Invite the business owners to also get involved!

Connect Through Social Media

The City shares a weekly social media message with the hashtag #FiberFriday to help build awareness and connect with the community. Create your own social media campaign with your networks and build on the #FiberFriday social media series by adding your own hashtag, calling your networks to action, and informing those you know about the Palo Alto Fiber effort.

Tips for sharing on social media:

- Use #FiberFriday and other relevant hashtags

- Always include the hub site link: **fiber.cityofpaloalto.org/**

- Directly share the City's posts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn

- Ask your friends and followers if they want to join a community conversation or share their ideas on the hub site

- Share these graphics to your network

You know your social media presence better than most. Share compelling anecdotes and what you're excited about with the City potentially offering fiber to your home and business.

Link Up at the Digital Forum

The Palo Alto Digital Forum is a place where community members can engage on various high-priority topics facing the community. The Palo Alto Fiber hub is a sub-site of the Digital Forum and includes an interactive platform for the community to get together virtually to talk about the Fiber project. Once at the Fiber hub, navigate to the 'Get Involved' tab where you will see a map with little yellow dots covering Palo Alto. These dots indicate community members who have shared their thoughts, ideas and what they're looking forward to with Palo Alto Fiber. You can share your interest, like and

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comment on others posts, and sign up to receive FIBERLink, a newsletter dedicated to providing updates, project announcements and notifications about Palo Alto Fiber.

No matter how you connect, building community and engaging your neighbors will help support the City's work as this effort continues to take shape.

Sign Up for Updates

FIBERLink is a new publication from the City of Palo Alto to provide updates and notifications about the fiber project. The monthly newsletter shares upcoming events, FAQs from the community, the benefits of fiber and ways that you can be involved and get others involved. You'll be the first to know what's new and what's next when you sign up. Don't wait, sign up today to receive FIBERLink.

Engage

Host a Community Conversation, In Person or Virtually

Once you've identified neighbors and community members who are interested in Palo Alto Fiber, hosting a community conversation or neighbor to neighbor meeting is a great next step to getting more people involved and informed.

Feel free to connect with City staff ahead of the conversation to make sure you have the most up to date information about the project, materials, and other potential resources. Email fiber@cityofpaloalto.org to connect with staff about your community conversation or meeting or if you have additional questions.

After your community conversation or meeting, share your meeting details, questions your group may have, comments and outcomes with staff at fiber@cityofpaloalto.org.

During your community conversation, take a photo to help encourage other neighbors to host meetings and tag the City on social media!

Conversation Tools

Host a Meeting

Hosting a successful meeting requires organization, coordination, and preparation. In advance of your meeting, you'll need to identify the best day and time when the most people can attend. Typically, in the evening after work and school is a good time to host a meeting, or during the weekend.

Create an event on your Facebook or Nextdoor account to invite your neighbors, utilize the Fiber hub to announce your community meeting, and invite people with a flyer or other word of mouth options.

Preparing an agenda ahead of time will incentivize other community members to attend, and having a clear plan of what you want to discuss will facilitate a smoothly run and productive conversation.

A sample agenda that you can use as a template or guide can be accessed on page 17. Having a PowerPoint presentation will also help your conversations and meetings flow better. Sample slides can be viewed on page 18. If you would like support in creating a Palo Alto Fiber presentation, please email fiber@cityofpaloalto.org.

Suggested Discussion Topics

Facilitate your community conversation with these the following suggested discussion topics. Choose to discuss all at one meeting or spread them out over a series of meetings.

⇒ What is Palo Alto Fiber including background of the fiber-to-the-home/premises project
⇒ Benefits to residents
⇒ Benefits to businesses
⇒ Ways to get involved
⇒ Ways to show support and provide input as the Council discusses next steps
⇒ Engaging community networks

All these topics and more can be found at fiber.cityofpaloalto.org and www.cityofpaloalto.org/paloaltofiber. Previous presentations, staff reports, and fact sheets are all hosted on these web pages. The Palo Alto Fiber fact sheet is also provided on page 14 here.

Activate

Activating your neighbors to learn about, participate with and engage about Palo Alto Fiber will further support discussions taking place with the City Council and staff work currently underway.

Video Testimonials

As an ambassador, you can share video testimonials and encourage other community networks and neighbors to also share their support. Suggested video platforms you may want to consider are YouTube shorts, TikToks, or Instagram/Facebook stories sharing what you're most excited for about Palo Alto Fiber. Videos could also be a call to action for others to get involved with the project by learning more, providing yourself as a community resource and getting more community members involved with the Palo Alto Fiber effort. Sharing videos is a great way to activate your neighbors, local businesses, and other community networks!

Friendly Neighborhood Competitions

Creating friendly competition among neighbors and neighborhoods is also a great way to activate community members on this effort. Who wants fiber the most? Which neighborhood has the most supporters? Through the Fiber hub, you can generate competition by encouraging your neighbors to show support. Competition ideas:

· Between two neighborhoods/blocks/etc. first group to get to X amount of people supporting on the map gets bragging rights
· If you're a small business, offer incentives by providing promotions or other ways to create competition while also supporting your business
· Create Facebook profile stickers for your neighborhood's support of Palo Alto Fiber

However, you create competition, be sure to encourage everyone to learn about Palo Alto Fiber and how it will benefit the community by sharing the Fiber hub site: Fiber.cityofpaloalto.org

Attachments

Palo Alto Fiber Frequently Asked Questions

Q: WHAT IS BROADBAND?

A: The term "broadband" refers to high-speed internet services that provide users access to online content including websites, television shows, videoconferencing, cloud services, or voice conversations. These applications can be accessed and shared through a variety of technologies including personal computers, smartphones, tablets, and other connected devices. Although the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) defines broadband speeds as at least 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload, demands for bandwidth are continually increasing.

Q: HOW DOES FIBER DELIVER BROADBAND?

A: Fiber-optic cables (or just "fiber") are strands of glass the diameter of a human hair that carry waves of light. Unlike other connections that carry electrons across copper wire, fiber supports fast, reliable connections by using photons across glass, giving it the capacity to carry nearly unlimited amounts of data across long distances at spectacularly fast speeds. Because of this speed and reliability, fiber is considered the gold standard for supporting broadband across the full spectrum of devices and applications. If properly maintained, fiber-optic cable has a lifespan of up to forty years. Due to its capacity for transmitting large amounts of data at high speeds, it will remain a preferred communications infrastructure type for many years to come.

Q: I'VE SEEN AT&T AND OTHER INTERNET PROVIDERS INSTALLING FIBER IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD. IF THEY'RE OFFERING FIBER TO THE COMMUNITY, WHY IS PALO ALTO FIBER BETTER OR WHY SHOULD I SUPPORT PALO ALTO FIBER?

A: If the project continues through the different phases, the City will offer fiber to the home and business to **everyone** in Palo Alto; whereas other internet service providers (ISP) are only offering fiber to areas where it is most profitable to them. Palo Alto Fiber creates competition between these other ISPs allowing community members to choose the best option for their household and business. When there are more internet service provider options and supply increases, this competition creates better customer pricing scenarios.

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Q: WHAT DOES SYMMETRICAL INTERNET SERVICE MEAN?
A: Symmetric internet connections have the same download and upload speeds. Asymmetric internet connections tend to offer much slower upload speeds, which can slow usage of the modern internet to a crawl. Upload speeds are important for videoconferencing, gaming, work from home and distance learning applications. Both cable and DSL networks are typically asymmetrical and have significantly lower and limited upload speeds, whereas fiber is symmetric, letting you do more with your internet connection.

Q: WHY IS THE CITY CONSIDERING PROVIDING HIGH-SPEED INTERNET?
A: The City of Palo Alto sees high-speed internet as a community-wide need that impacts residents, businesses, schools, hospitals, public safety, and overall quality of life. To meet the needs of the community, the City is considering leveraging its existing fiber network and investment in new fiber to offer fast, reliable internet services to businesses and residents. By doing so, Palo Alto would be joining more than 100 communities across 20 states that offer high-speed internet to their residents and businesses.

Q: DOESN'T PALO ALTO ALREADY HAVE INTERNET SERVICE OPTIONS FROM PRIVATE PROVIDERS?
A: Palo Alto's residents and businesses currently have internet service offerings from providers, predominately AT&T and Comcast. However, most of these services are based on older copper infrastructure, which is proving less reliable and not capable of providing next-generation internet speeds and bandwidth. A fiber-based high-speed internet service offering from the City of Palo Alto could expand the availability of high-speed internet service that is locally owned and operated at more affordable rates.

Q: WHY IS FIBER THE BEST OPTION FOR HIGH-SPEED INTERNET?
A: Fiber provides the fastest, most reliable internet service available. Nationwide, municipalities, utilities, and private companies are estimated to invest more than $60 billion in fiber to the home networks over the next 5 years. Of the 100 municipalities that provide high-speed internet, 90% of them do so using fiber.

Q: HOW WIDELY IS FIBER DEPLOYED TODAY?
A: Over 20 million homes nationally use fiber for their high-speed internet services today.

Q: WHY CAN'T WIRELESS PROVIDE HIGH-SPEED INTERNET?

A: While wireless networks are improving, wireless internet systems are not capable of providing the same speeds and reliability in dense urban environments like Palo Alto. Trees, buildings, and even weather can impact the reliability of wireless technologies.

Q: WHAT ARE DATA CAPS?
A: Data caps are limitations that some providers put on how much internet you can use each month. Palo Alto Fiber will not impose any data caps so you can endlessly use your internet.

Q: WHAT STEPS HAS PALO ALTO TAKEN TO IMPROVE BROADBAND TO DATE?
A: Palo Alto has been deploying fiber for City use over the last several years and currently has a program for dark fiber leasing to large businesses within the City. In 2020, at the direction of City Council and based on recommendation of the Utilities Advisory Commission, the City began work on a Fiber Optic Expansion Plan to explore the feasibility and business model options for expanding Palo Alto's existing infrastructure to create a Citywide Fiber Backbone and potentially provide fiber-to-the-home for residents. The Fiber Optic Expansion Plan is being studied and developed in phases and is currently entering Phase 2 of 4. Go to the project page for more details.

Q: WHAT SERVICES WOULD THE CITY PROVIDE?
A: Upon recommendations from the Utilities Advisory Commission, the City is conducting a study and considering providing fiber-based high-speed symmetrical internet services to residents and businesses. Other internet-based services may be made available based on the community's needs as determined by the study.

Q: WHY IS MY INPUT IMPORTANT?
A: The City is engaging the community about needs for additional broadband options to understand the opportunities for providing internet services to residents and businesses in the future. Input from the community will inform the City Council decision making process and other staff work underway.

Q: WHAT ARE NEXT STEPS FOR THE PLAN?
A: The Fiber Optic Expansion Plan will be developed based on community input and will be provided to the Utilities Advisory Commission and City Council for consideration of next steps.

Palo Alto Fiber Fact Sheet

PALO ALTO FIBER **FACT SHEET**

SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Fiber is the gold standard for fast, reliable internet, far outpacing DSL and cable. It is capable of carrying vast amounts of data over enormous distances and can support the symmetrical upload and download speeds, allowing for the seamless connectivity that is needed in today's digital world.

LOCALLY OWNED

Whereas large corporations are accountable to their shareholders, the Palo Alto Fiber network is accountable to our community, creating more responsiveness and local control.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Community broadband networks provide high-speed, reliable connections at affordable costs, providing connectivity to support work from home, distance learning and telehealth across the community.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

Palo Alto's community broadband network will benefit the community at large by keeping dollars local. Your dollars are invested into the community broadband network for the benefit of Palo Alto's residents and businesses.
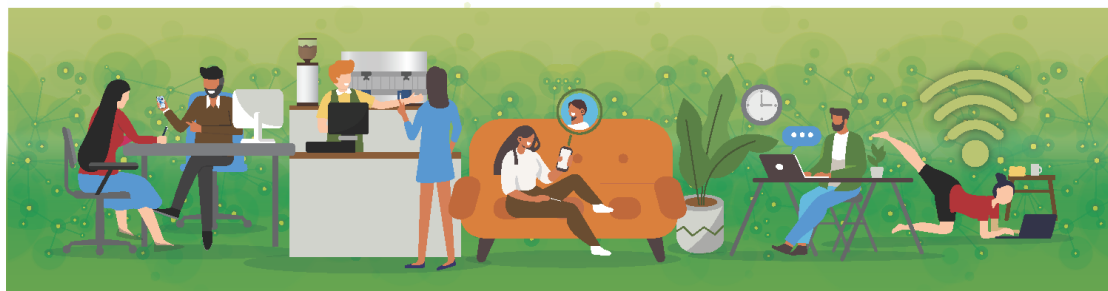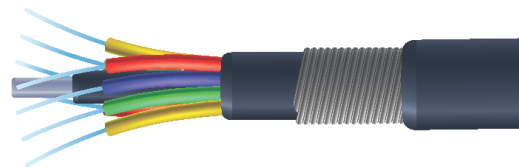
COMPETITION

Public investment in broadband infrastructure creates competition, improving services and keeping costs down for reliable high-speed internet.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Providing local businesses with high-speed, reliable internet at reasonable costs allows us to retain and attract companies, developing a diverse and robust local economy.

Sample Agenda

Title of Your Meeting if any

Location	**Virtual Link to Join or Physical Address**
Presenters	First and Last Name, Title or Affiliation First and Last Name, Title or Affiliation First and Last Name, Title or Affiliation

Schedule of Events

Welcome & Introductions — Name of facilitator/presenter

What is Palo Alto Fiber? — Name of presenter
fiber.cityofpaloalto.org

Topic #2 — Name of presenter
Options for Supporting the Palo Alto
Fiber effort

Topic #3 — Name of presenter

Open Discussion Forum — Name of facilitator

Adjourn

Sample Presentation

If you would like to obtain a presentation similar to the one below, please email fiber@cityofpaloalto.org with your request.

BACKGROUND

Palo Alto Fiber is the City's project to expand the existing fiber backbone and potentially provide high-speed internet to every home and business in Palo Alto.

What is fiber?
- Broadband, high-speed internet
- Data access to websites, television shows, videoconferencing, cloud services and more
- Rather than using wireless connections to access the internet, fiber directly connects your home or business to the City's fiber backbone using both aerial and underground support assests

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BENEFITS OF PALO ALTO FIBER

Service Excellence
- Fiber is the gold standard for fast, reliable internet, far outpacing DSL and cable
- Capable of carrying vast amounts of data and can support symmetrical upload and download speeds

Locally Owned
- Whereas large corporations are accountable to their shareholders, the Palo Alto Fiber network is accountable to our community
- More responsiveness and local control
- Service representatives would be City staff who know the needs and environment of Palo Alto

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BENEFITS CONTINUED

Quality of Life
- Community broadband networks provide high-speed, reliable connections at affordable costs
- Connectivity to support work from home, distance learning and telehealth across the community
- Available for all Palo Alto residents and businesses

Community Investment
- Keeps dollars local by investing in Palo Alto's community broadband network
- Supports the local economy

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BENEFITS CONTINUED

Economic Development
- Providing local businesses with high-speed, reliable internet
- Reasonable costs allow the City to retain and attract companies
- Develops a diverse and robust local economy

Competition
- Public investment in broadband infrastructure creates competition
- This improves services and keeps costs down for reliable high-speed internet

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OPTIONS TO SUPPORT PALO ALTO FIBER

- Sign up to receive FIBERLink
- Pin your household or business on the Fiber Hub
- Review the blog *"Five Fiber Tips to Plug Into Palo Alto Fiber"*
- Host your own neighborhood conversation
- Share the Fiber Hub with your neighbors and friends
- Connect on social media
- Attend an upcoming meeting and share your support