



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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SUPPORT POURS IN FOR LINKNYC

Proposal for largest, fastest free Wi-Fi municipal network in world to be voted upon December 10

For more information on the proposal, visit www.link.nyc

NEW YORK—LinkNYC, a proposal to leverage old payphone infrastructure to build the world’s largest, fastest free municipal Wi-Fi network was announced by Mayor de Blasio last month. LinkNYC would dramatically increase broadband speeds in neighborhoods across all five boroughs, provide free domestic calling at all times, and generate millions of dollars annually to reinvest into additional programs aimed at bridging the digital divide for New Yorkers who need it most.

Positive feedback on the LinkNYC proposal has poured in from leaders of all parts of City life, including civic technology, community organizations, academia, human services, volunteer organizations, small business, faith-based organizations, and more.

For more information on the proposal, visit www.link.nyc.

“The road to an ubiquitous Internet and inclusive digital equity begins with LinkNYC as the launchpad. We at Silicon Harlem wholeheartedly endorse this initiative as an important driver for a broadband innovation economy that creates prosperity across the five boroughs of New York City. Creating socio-economic parity for all residents and businesses starts with LinkNYC,” said **Bruce Lincoln** and **Clayton Banks, Co-Founders of Silicon Harlem**.

“Conversion of payphones to free phones and Wi-Fi reinforces the city’s competitive status as a center of innovation and benefits businesses and residents across the five boroughs. It should go forward as planned,” said **Kathryn Wylde, CEO, President and Director, Partnership for New York City, Inc.**

“That this program will bring jobs in a variety of sectors alone is what makes this new initiative great. I also hope to see some of the money that comes in flow back into the community,”
Hassan Bakiriddin, Member, Brooklyn Community Board 17.

“The New York City Building and Construction Trades Council supports Mayor de Blasio’s LinkNYC proposal and encourages a unanimous FCRC affirmative vote. The plan, which will build the world’s fastest WiFi network across the city, creates hundreds of quality jobs for Building trades members. This plan is a true win-win for all New Yorkers,” said **Gary LaBarbera, NYC Building and Construction Trades Council.**

“New York City needs to compete on a world stage and the largest, fastest, free Wi-Fi network in the world, built at no taxpayer cost, is a big part of getting us there. The digital divide can’t be solved overnight, but one that significantly enhances speed across all five boroughs and allows us to devote revenues from it to additional solutions, is exactly what’s needed. Our organization and members urge the FCRC to approve this proposal to make New York City the digital capital it deserves to be,” said **Jonathan Westin, NYC Communities for Change; Javier Valdes, Make The Road; and Susannah Dyen, ALIGN.**

“We applaud Mayor de Blasio and the City of New York for seeking creative and innovative ways to connect people across the city and narrow the digital divide. Through this project, more New Yorkers will benefit from the free and open Internet the Mayor has championed. And many communities across the country will be watching New York’s progress and learning from its example,” said **Craig Aaron, President and CEO, Free Press.**

“The LinkNYC plan would do more than extend Wi-Fi service in the city, it would turn antiquated payphone kiosks across the city into hubs for way-finding, free calling, and other important services for visitors, workers and residents. These benefits, combined with the fees paid to the City’s general fund, would provide tremendous public benefit, and we think it’s an essential step forward for connecting all New Yorkers and keeping our city competitive,” said **Bill Rudin, Chairman, Association for a Better New York.**

“If New York City wants to secure its place as a global innovation hub, it is critical to upgrade infrastructure and transform itself into a truly wired city. LinkNYC is an important first step of what hopefully will be many projects to improve access to the internet everywhere throughout the city,” said **Heidi Messer, Internet investor and co-founder of Collective[i], one of the fastest growing New York City-based enterprise software companies.**

“The LinkNYC network is an exciting step in the right direction for New York City. There is no one single solution to better broadband for everyone. We will need many efforts like LinkNYC, the recently announced NYC Public Library initiative, community efforts like what is going on in Red Hook, and many more. Each of these is a big positive for New York City. A free ad supported network like the LinkNYC effort will naturally favor dense areas because of the advertising model. But we should not lose sight of the fact that LinkNYC will also bring faster broadband Wi-Fi to residential neighborhoods than wired broadband that is commercially available from Verizon or Time Warner Cable today. We should not let perfect be the enemy of the good here,” said **Fred Wilson, Managing Partner, Union Square Ventures.**

“Access to fast and reliable Wi-Fi has become a necessity. These upgrades will remove significant barriers to success for struggling individuals and families across the city and better enable nonprofit human service providers to connect those they serve with opportunities. The human services community commends the Mayor for recognizing the importance of Wi-Fi access to progress for all New Yorkers,” said **Allison Sesso, Executive Director, Human Services Council.**

“The speed that matters isn’t the speed of the hotspots—the 100 Mbps baseline speed at all Links is some 25 times faster than the Federal Communications Commission’s current definition of broadband Internet. What matters is the speed with which the City and CityBridge can deliver this essential new infrastructure. The clock is ticking. It’s time to focus on implementing this bold plan—and plan for future expansion. LinkNYC is about re-inventing the city’s public spaces, and these new hotspots will light up thousands of street corners, bus stops, parks and playgrounds with state-of-the-art connectivity,” said **Dr. Anthony Townsend, Senior Research Scientist, NYU Rudin Center for Transportation and author, “Smart Cities.”**

“For the thousands of low-income East Harlem residents who routinely make the unimaginable choice between paying for food or heat, the Mayor’s plan to provide widely accessible, free Wi-Fi will open the door to a life-changing freedom for them to improve their own lives. Families living in poverty will finally have open access to employment, educational and networking opportunities, health care, mental health resources, and even the ability to track the progress of their school-age children. Until now, these basic, yet critical, necessities have essentially been out of reach for the poorest in our city simply because of the cost,” said **Traci Lester, Executive Director of LSA Family Health Service.**

“Over 80 percent of the over 2,000 LGBTQ youth served by HMI annually are living at or below the Federal poverty line. And yet, over 80 percent of our homeless youth self-report the foregoing of food and shelter if it means not being able to afford their cell phone payment—as this is their only reliable way of connecting to a social network and resources available via the Internet. Homeless youth will actively seek out free Wi-Fi as a means of connecting to life-saving services such as shelter, food, health services and more. Free Internet and Wi-Fi allows lifesaving services reach those most vulnerable who need them the most,” said **Thomas Krever, Chief Executive Officer, Hetrick-Martin Institute.**

“With this bold initiative, the de Blasio administration is showing the nation in no uncertain terms that access to the Internet has become as essential to our city’s health and success as access to electricity and water were at the beginning of the Industrial Age—and that fighting information inequality is a prerequisite that insures a more equitable society. Making the world’s information resources available to as many New Yorkers as possible is now a critical and fundamental requirement for success in education, business, safety, transportation, health, and every need for our city’s future,” said **Andrew Rasiej, Chairman, NY Tech Meetup.**

“Replacing New York City’s ancient payphones with up to Gigabit-speed Wi-Fi kiosks is a fantastic initiative. It’s an innovative and cost-effective way to deliver free, on-the-go connectivity across most of the busier corners of the city, benefitting New Yorkers and visitors

alike. It would be a huge disappointment to see political squabbling slow down what can be a first-in-the-world and best-in-the-world free public connectivity infrastructure worthy of New York City. The initial build-out is not the end of the story—and we should not let the perfect be the enemy of the good,” said **Andrew McLaughlin, CEO of Digg and Instapaper; former Deputy Chief Technology Officer to President Obama.**

“In this digital age, Wi-Fi access is critical for job searches, housing searches and access to information about services offered by the City of New York, as well as by a myriad of social agencies that are available to help New Yorkers. The expansion of Wi-Fi is a welcome addition to the communities we serve. Individuals on Supplemental Security Income, who manage on \$808 a month, can’t afford the high cost of paid data plans. The potential that Wi-Fi could be used for 911 calls would address the needs of people who are deaf. This is a great initiative that can benefit New Yorkers with disabilities. Bravo!” said **Paul Feuerstein, President/CEO, Barrier Free Living.**

“The implementation of LinkNYC will have a transformative effect throughout the City and it will serve as a natural complement to the free Wi-Fi system that the Union Square Partnership provides within Union Square Park, helping to boost service to the surrounding area. We applaud the City for making this project a priority, and we look forward to seeing the new kiosks and their robust amenities within the area,” said **Jen Falk, Executive Director, Union Square Partnership.**

“The City of New York’s new LinkNYC initiative represents an essential step in the continued growth of the city’s innovation economy and provides the foundation for continued expansion of access to high-speed Internet for all New Yorkers. By upgrading currently outdated and underutilized payphones, New Yorker’s will gain new opportunities to stay connected and access information key to their everyday lives. We know that access is essential to engagement and involvement in all aspects of the technology economy, and LinkNYC offers the city’s residents more opportunities for access than ever before,” said **Jessica Lawrence, Executive Director, NY Tech Meetup.**

“Repurposing phone booths to allow for Wi-Fi, free nationwide phone calls, phone charging stations, and wayfinding would be a huge benefit for the borough of Queens. The commercial streets of our neighborhoods are hubs of commerce. Having this technology accessible in our neighborhoods will greatly benefit local residents, businesspeople and visitors,” said **Seth Bornstein, Executive Director, Queens Economic Development Corporation.**

“This sounds like a really great program. Definitely innovative and a way to keep New Yorkers connected to the city, each other, and their community. Free Wi-Fi is a thing of the now!” said **Carmen Sognonvi, Small Business Owner, Urban Dojo.**

“For far too long, antiquated and inoperable payphones have cluttered the streetscape and been an impediment to growth and vitality of commercial corridors throughout the five boroughs. LinkNYC will provide for sleek, durable and usable replacements for traditional payphones that provide tangible benefits for residents and merchants alike, including USB charging and no cost

Wi-Fi access,” said **Tim Laughlin, Executive Director, Lower East Side Business Improvement District.**

“LinkNYC represents a bold, positive step toward a more inclusive digital future for New York City. Between free public wireless Internet and free phone calls, LinkNYC kiosks will provide an indispensable resource for everyone that lives and visits the city—most importantly, those underserved and low-income New Yorkers that don’t have access to or can’t afford the cost of high-speed Internet access. The gigabit speed kiosks and the fiber that powers them will provide a key building block in helping make New York a first-class digital city, and will have the same impact on our whole community as indoor plumbing, clean running water, electricity, and the subway systems did over a century ago,” said **Dana Spiegel, Executive Director, NYCwireless.**

“I am very excited to see the communities we serve. We work as a program that provides services to children in low-income communities. Wi-Fi hotspots around New York City will be great for children and parents to keep their phones charged throughout the day, so that they can get in touch with each other. It is also great for kids to be able to make free phone calls to parents if they are stuck in a jam,” said **Maurelhena Walles, Executive Director, Fit4LifeNYC.**

“The direction the city is going is the right one. Many of the small businesses in our community just cannot afford to provide Wi-Fi to its customers. But with this program and the Wi-Fi reaching far and wide, it will allow more patrons to flow into the area, while boosting business and sales to the surrounding businesses,” said **Lindsay Ray, Small Business Owner, Expression in Ceramics.**

“The advertisements, the public service announcements, the free 911 and 311 calls from the station—how can you go wrong? Allowing New Yorkers to stay in connection with all things around them is a huge plus. Not only is this great for New Yorkers, but for tourists alike. I think this security will help us feel safer in our areas because we can be connected 24/7,” said **Sheila Akbar, Small Business Owner, Bedstuy Fresh and Local.**

“In the age of Information Technology, having access to Wi-Fi and the Internet has become a necessity in the lives of not only those that can afford to pay for services through the various telecommunication providers, but for those that are less fortunate. Regardless of a person’s ability to pay for Wi-Fi, access to the information through the Internet should be available to all that would like to receive it,” said **LeShan A. Gaulman, MSW, Program Director of Barrier Free Living’s Transitional Housing Program.**

“Replacing the old outdated payphones located all over the city with fast, new, sleek Wi-Fi kiosks is a crucial advancement for the city. This project will require a lot of work from several industries. This is an exciting opportunity which will create hundreds of jobs for New Yorkers and any project that supports Union Labor, we are in support of,” said **Sal Tagliaferro, President, Local 926, Carpenters and Joiners of America.**

“LinkNYC is a transformative initiative that will provide high-speed internet access to Queens communities and residents. Repositioning these outdated telephone assets to provide free services to our City is a no brainer and a clear win for everyone. These new access points are a

critical step in serving the 1.8 million New Yorkers who currently don't have internet access and encouraging the development of new innovation businesses that our economy needs," said **Jukay Hsu, Founder, Coalition for Queens (C4Q)**.

"New York Disaster Interfaith Services, and our federation of over 60 New York City faith communities, want to voice our vigorous support for upgrading our City's communications infrastructure from outdated payphones to wireless kiosks. This is a critical step toward building a more disaster-resilient whole community through state-of-the-art access to risk communication for all New Yorkers. This upgrade will be significant to the evolution of our City's already exceptional disaster preparedness and response communication capacity. This technology will allow any New Yorkers in any neighborhood to access NotifyNYC alerts, receive evacuation orders, or learn their coastal storm evacuation routes or flood zones. Simply put, it will save lives," said **Peter B. Gudaitis, M.Div., Chief Response Officer, New York Disaster Interfaith Services**.

"Long Island City is one of the fastest growing areas of the city, heavily used by businesses, residents, and visitors both local and global—all of whom require high-speed Internet that is broadly available. LinkNYC can be an important enhancement to the digital infrastructure for this unique and vital community," said **Elizabeth Lusskin, Executive Director of the Long Island City Partnership**.

"As small businesses struggle to keep up with technology to better serve their customers, a program like LinkNYC is one more tool to support them in this endeavor," said **Lisa Sorin, Executive Director, Westchester Square Business Improvement District (Bronx)**.

"Providing people more reasons to spend more time in our commercial shopping districts translates into increased foot traffic and more potential customers for the small businesses of the City. With the launch of free public wifi in the FAB Alliance Business Improvement District (BID) along Brooklyn's Fulton Street in Fort Greene and Clinton Hill, we saw significant demand for high speed high-speed internet service in our public spaces," said **Phillip Kellogg, Executive Director, Fulton Area Business (FAB) Alliance, Business Improvement District, Fort Greene and Clinton Hill, Brooklyn**.

"Access to information through advanced technology for both individuals and communities in crisis is paramount to keep our neighborhoods safe. The Salvation Army salutes such efforts, and thanks City Hall for implementing such a vital preparedness tool," said **John Berglund, Emergency Services Director, The Salvation Army, Greater New York Division**.

"Having recruited, trained, and managed thousands of volunteers in response to disasters throughout the city, we know that when preparing for and responding to disasters, the ability to stay connected and access critical information is vital. We commend the City's efforts to build a modern digital infrastructure in every corner of New York City, said **Gary Bagley, Executive Director, New York Cares**.

"We are excited about exploring new ways of connecting the brands we work with to New Yorkers on the street, not just through advertising, but through new experiences that connectivity

enables. As New Yorkers who live and work in the City, this is an important first step, and we can't wait to have them on our streets," said **Andrew Essex, Vice Chairman of Droga5**.

"The Internet has democratized access to entrepreneurship for millions of people. Initiatives like LinkNYC, which help many more people get online, are an important first step toward building a more connected city," said **Althea Erickson, Public Policy Director, Etsy**.

"I listen to stories all the time about how challenging it can be to live or work without access to proper connectivity; without it, we lose out on meaningful information, opportunities, and connections that can only be found and made online. LinkNYC provides access to a critical and fundamental resource for all New Yorkers—the ability to connect—and this improved access ensures that everyone will have a chance to participate in our increasingly digital economy," said **Arie Barendrecht, Executive Director, WiredNYC**.

"LinkNYC has the right combination of scale, technologies, and vision to become a platform that transforms digital out-of-home advertising. It's exactly the type of innovation you'd expect in the biggest media market in the world. It will create massive utility value for consumers in New York City while also creating new jobs in the advertising community," **Scott Hagedorn, CEO of Annalect**.

"The replacing of old, outdated payphones located all over the city with fast, new, Wi-Fi kiosks is a brilliant undertaking and a job requiring some very hard work in street reconstruction. It will be a huge advancement, an exciting opportunity, and a great benefit for all people in New York City. We look forward to everyone working toward clear goals for a community workforce agreement to employ our returning veterans and provide good career opportunities for local residents in New York City during the construction phase of this project," said **Lowell Barton, Vice President, Laborers Local 1010**.

"The West 116th Street Community Association is excited and looking forward to the new NYCLink Wi-Fi hotspots being installed in our community. After meeting with representatives of the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications, seeing the prototype, and hearing about the features being offered, we think it will be a successful program for the whole of New York City. This new and exciting program will benefit those living in our community," said **Giovannia Esquivel, Secretary, West 116th Street Community Association**.

"The LinkNYC project, transforming payphones into municipal Wi-Fi hotspots, will be a tremendous step forward for internet accessibility in New York City. It will catapult New York to the forefront of city-scale Wi-Fi networks, and turn an underutilized relic of the twentieth century into a broadly available digital age resource for residents and visitors alike. The scale of the proposed project, with many thousands of nodes, is unprecedented—when fully operational, it will transform New York in ways that are difficult to imagine today. For instance, the Tug app recently envisioned by Cornell Tech students to warn smartphone users when they may be walking into an intersection could easily be built on top of this new network infrastructure," said **Dan Huttenlocher, Dean and Vice Provost, Cornell Tech**.

“We are thrilled to be part of this plan, which is cutting-edge not only in its application of new, smart technologies, but because it prioritizes community engagement and support along with tools for universal broadband access,” said **Greta Byrum, Senior Field Analyst, Open Technology Institute.**

“Good paying job creation in New York City is being driven by the intersection of technology, design and production. LinkNYC will fuel the growth of the innovation economy, bringing affordable high-speed connectivity to every corner of the city. We can’t miss out on this unique opportunity,” said **Andrew Kimball, CEO, Industry City.**

“Citywide connectivity is the bedrock of a smart city. And becoming a smart city is the key to staying globally competitive. By creating the world’s largest free municipal Wi-Fi network, New York has created the platform for its future prosperity,” said **Jesse Berst, Chairman of the Smart Cities Council.**

“The proposal is fantastic—New York City as a smart city, a sustainable city, and electric city. The world will once again be watching New York City with awe as it applies technology and new business models to bring the entire city intimate, instant connection to the entire planet,” said **Donald R. Sadoway, John F. Elliott Professor of Materials Chemistry, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.**

“These connections will make it easier and more affordable for low-income New Yorkers to access health, educational, employment and other opportunities and services and to connect with family, friends, community members and government than ever before. And this initiative will set an example of how public-private partnerships can enable access to broadband speed and affordability for all residents,” said **Jalak Jobanputra, Managing Partner, Future Perfect Ventures.**

“We live in the Internet Age, where digital connectivity is key to accessing education, jobs, and the people we care about. LinkNYC will empower millions of New Yorkers with better access to the modern-day tools—including superfast Wi-Fi—that they need to improve their own lives. We can’t wait any longer. It is high time for New York City to lead the way toward more innovative and impactful 21st Century solutions,” said **John Paul Farmer, Founder and CEO of the Innovation Project, a 501(c)3, and former Senior Advisor for Innovation to President Obama.**

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