Agenda Report

DATE: MARCH 19, 2001

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: APPLICATION FOR TECHNOLOGY OPPORTUNITIES GRANT FOR
            DEVELOPMENT OF A NORTHWEST PASADENA TECHNOLOGY
            NETWORK AND TELECONFERENCING CENTER

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council adopt a resolution approving the grant application
request for up to $882,000 for the Technology Opportunities Grant to develop a Northwest
Pasadena Technology Network and Teleconferencing Center.

BACKGROUND:

The Department of Commerce's Technology Opportunities Program (TOP) promotes the
widespread availability and use of advanced telecommunications technologies in the public and
non-profit sectors. As part of the Department's National Telecommunications and Information
Administration (NTIA), TOP gives grants for model projects demonstrating innovative uses of
network technology that among other things empower end users to move beyond passive
information consumption to become valued contributors to the development, modification, and
expansion of shared information resources. TOP evaluates and actively shares the lessons
learned from these projects to ensure the benefits are broadly distributed across the country,
especially in rural and underserved communities.

The Technology Opportunities Program (TOP) awards grants through an annual competition.
NTIA will have approximately $42.5 million to award in grant funds. The deadline for receipt
of applications is March 22, 2001.

The Northwest Pasadena Technology Network and Teleconferencing Center seeks to close the
digital divide between low-income residents in Northwest Pasadena and the rest of the city
through a unique collaborative between the City of Pasadena, and a number of established
community organizations and businesses, including Communities Organizing Resources to
Advance Learning (CORAL), the Flintridge Foundation, Pasadena Heritage, and Affordable
Housing Development Corporation (AHDC) and others. This collaborative will provide a
conduit for accessing information age tools and enhancing skills required to use technology
effectively. The Northwest Community Plan will serve as the framework for the collaborative.

The funds will be used for acquisition of hardware and software tools; installation or connection of high-speed Internet access; web, GIS, and interactive format development; computer training and technical assistance, and site maintenance for up to three years.

Residents of Northwest Pasadena (adults and school-age students) will gain technological skills and knowledge through "hands on" learning to engage and navigate the Internet and World Wide Web, and to apply its resources to daily life issues (e.g. searching for employment opportunities, engaging in learning activities, providing community input to update the Northwest Community Plan and track its progress, and networking with other area residents about community improvement and historical preservation efforts). Parents or guardians and their children will attend joint enhancement classes to share similar technology "experiences" in an effort to maintain continuity from classroom to home.

Through this community "Intranet", Northwest Pasadena residents will have the opportunity to access information on neighborhood historical and cultural heritage and on surrounding economic, social, recreational, and other resources within the City of Pasadena. Web-based resources will include (but not be limited to): residential architectural styles present in the area (pictures and descriptions of housing styles); histories and descriptions of neighborhoods, including current works-in-progress for individual residential improvement projects; and links to resources needed to promote community self-improvement (accessing commercial or local lending programs; home improvement resources; or neighborhood skill exchange pools). Property owners will have interactive experiences with placing data or accessing information through the intranet regarding their projects for home-improvement. This activity will help to empower low-income residents in their efforts to maintain their properties and stabilize their neighborhoods.

The Intranet will also integrate selected databases and mapping applications, such as Tidemark and GIS, to provide residents with access to interactive web pages and links relevant to the community. These interactive pages will allow residents to identify community assets, monitor development projects, track public improvements, explore employment and job training opportunities, identify properties that provide affordable housing, and create neighborhood historical records, that will serve to build stronger neighborhoods. They will provide responses to surveys and questionnaires, as well as comments that will be utilized in updating the Northwest Community Plan.

The City of Pasadena will serve as the lead organization through its Northwest Programs. The Information Technology Department, the Human Services Department, the Pasadena Public Library, and Planning & Permitting will comprise the City's team. Staff is working with several potential partners, including, non-profit agencies, community-based organizations, individuals and businesses, to join the City in its effort to develop and implement this project for the benefit of the greater Northwest area.

The timeline outlined by the Department of Commerce is as follows: application review in April and May; negotiations to clarify various budget issues in July; selection in early September, and awards announced at the end of September.
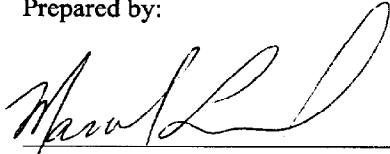
FISCAL IMPACT:

Successful award of the TOP grant application for the development of the Northwest Technology Network and Teleconferencing Center could potentially bring up to a maximum of $882,000 to the City of Pasadena. Matching contributions from the City will come from projects already identified in Planning & Permitting and other departments. The partners will provide in-kind contributions, discounts or associated program match.

Respectfully submitted,

For CYNTHIA J. KURTZ
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