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## Newer areas of Brentwood to get super-fast Internet service

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BRENTWOOD -- Blazing fast high-speed Internet service is coming to the newer areas of Brentwood after the City Council approved a plan to bring a fiber-optic network to newer parts of the city.

"Brentwood would be the first city in the Bay Area to offer gigabit service to both residents and businesses," Kerry Breen, the city's assistant finance director, said after the vote. "We're hoping what this will do is encourage more businesses to come here."

Gigabit service is available to homes in Sebastopol and to business customers in San Leandro but not both, he said.

Some 8,000 homes along with businesses that moved into commercial areas built since 1999 will be able to sign up for the service within 15 months under terms of a public-private partnership agreement between the city and Santa Rosa-based Sonic Telecom. Gigabit service is 50 to 400 times faster than conventional Internet speeds, said a staff report recommending approval of the agreement. It was approved 5-0 by the council Tuesday night.

"This basically takes Brentwood from being a bike path or footpath in technology to being a superhighway in technology," Vice Mayor Joel Bryant said before council members voted. "I'm very, very excited about this. This is an opportunity to improve the quality of life for our residents, the quality of businesses we are able to attract."

The agreements calls for Sonic Telecom to install fiber-optic lines in empty underground conduits installed by developers as a condition of project approvals for subdivisions and new businesses in areas built since 1999. The conduits, which were turned over to the city for operations and maintenance, would be leased by Sonic Telecom.

Also, free gigabit service would be installed in local public schools, provided 30 percent of residents living within the school boundaries are Sonic subscribers.

The monthly cost of subscribing to Sonic's gigabit service for residents would be \$39.95. (The rate includes both Internet and phone service but not cable television content.) The \$39.95 rate would be available to businesses on a per-desk basis, which means a business with 10 employees would pay about \$400 a month. Brentwood hopes to attract high-tech and health care businesses, which need superfast Internet service to set up shop here.

Brentwood will join an elite group of cities where residential customers have access to gigabit service. Nationwide, only 50 communities in 14 states offered gigabit service to homes as of January 2013, the staff report said.

The agreement with Sonic calls for the first customers to be connected within nine months and for all customers with conduit access to be connected within 15 months. Sonic is also working with the city to develop plans to bring fiber-optic lines to other parts of the city that do not currently have the necessary infrastructure to offer the gigabit service, according to Breen.

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