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*** PRESS RELEASE ***

MAYOR NEWSOM ANNOUNCES FIRST OF ITS KIND WIRELESS INITIATIVE
City reaches agreement with EarthLink to provide universal free or affordable wireless internet access
Google to provide free service tier and bring innovative new applications and services

SAN FRANCISCO, CA – Mayor Gavin Newsom announced today that San Francisco is poised to become the first major city in the country to offer free universal wireless internet access. Mayor Newsom first proposed free wireless as the first step in a larger initiative to create a comprehensive digital inclusion strategy that includes computer hardware, technology training, and internet access targeted at helping bridge the digital divide for low-income communities. The agreement reached today between the City and EarthLink will provide wireless internet access at no cost throughout San Francisco. By partnering with the private sector, the City can deploy and maintain this infrastructure at no cost to the taxpayers, while allowing those with the technological expertise to maintain service.

The agreement is the product of a process that has been ongoing for over a year and the result of a uniquely transparent process noteworthy for the fact that all documents were posted online regularly. With the finalization of the deal, the agreement will go to the Board of Supervisors for review and approval. Mayor Newsom applauded the efforts of City staff, and the City Attorney's office for brining the proposal to fruition, saying "It is my hope that the City's legislative branch will join me in leveraging the power of the internet to enhance the lives of our citizens."

The mayor also said, "This agreement to bring free universal wireless internet access to San Francisco is a critical step in bridging the digital divide that separates too many communities from the enormous benefits of technology. Ubiquitous WiFi will change how residents access education, social services and economic opportunities." The mayor continued saying, "This will make city government more effective and accountable to the people we serve."

"We are excited about this historic public-private partnership that we believe will serve as a new model for internet access across the country. And we are pleased to have this opportunity to demonstrate our unique capacity to provide this dynamic and essential technology to the residents of San Francisco. We applaud Mayor Newsom and the City of San Francisco for its commitment to providing free or affordable wireless to all its citizens," said Donald Berryman Executive Vice President of Earthlink and President of the ISP's Municipal Network's Unit.

This agreement marks a significant change from the more typical hotspots or hot zones where WiFi access is available in proscribed areas – something that is currently available in many cities and municipalities. San Francisco's initiative seeks ubiquitous connectivity anywhere, anytime – an especially difficult challenge in a city renowned for its hilly topography – and at no cost to users. The terms of the agreement protects privacy and security of all users, and provides consumer choice through open access.

Universal free wireless is the anchor of Mayor Newsom's TechConnect initiative that focuses on "Digital Inclusion" by creating access and providing hardware, content and training for residents without the benefit of real time, consistent access to technology. For more information on the Mayor's TechConnect initiative, please log onto www.sfgov.org/techconnect.

The City conducted a Request for Information/Comment, which solicited extensive public input including over 300 public comments and 26 proposals from the private and non-profit sectors for how best to provide affordable, universal WiFi. The City incorporated many of the ideas and practices that were presented in the RFI/C process for an RFP. The WiFi Agreement can be viewed at www.sfgov.org/techconnect.

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