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City of Fort Worth partners with Cisco to promote digital inclusion in under-connected neighborhoods

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News Summary:

- An estimated 60,000 Fort Worth residents lack home access to the Internet. This community Wi-Fi rollout provides free access to 5 under-connected neighborhoods, home to an estimated 40,000 residents.
- This initiative is the largest deployment of Cisco Ultra-Reliable Wireless Backhaul for neighborhood Wi-Fi use in the United States.
- This technology provides quick, reliable, and secure connectivity to communities in support of the City of Fort Worth's long-term strategy for fiber buildout.

FORT WORTH, Texas, Aug. 16, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- In a strategic effort to promote increased digital connectivity and social inclusion, Cisco has partnered with the City of Fort Worth to announce expanded, free Wi-Fi access in neighborhoods with limited connectivity. At an event alongside industry leaders from Cisco and digital services and solutions provider Presidio, Fort Worth Mayor Mattie Parker announced the neighborhood Wi-Fi initiative on the expanded city network named *CFW-Neighborhood*, which offers Internet access in five Fort Worth neighborhoods: Ash Crescent, Como, Northside, Rosemont, and Stop Six. Deployment is scheduled to be completed this fall. Currently, over 60,000 Fort Worth residents lack access to home connectivity. This community wifi initiative will provide free access to 5 under-connected neighborhoods, home to an estimated 40,000 residents.

The lack of connectivity was greatly exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. With many people working remotely and students attending classes in a virtual setting, the need for reliable Wi-Fi was evident. This implementation also assists Fort Worth residents' ability to access virtual medical appointments, conduct job searches, and apply for social assistance and government services.

"Just like power and water, the Internet is a basic necessity for our communities to be successful. By implementing *CFW-Neighborhood* Wi-Fi in these five neighborhoods, we are bridging a steep digital

divide in parts of our City that need it the most, empowering more residents to complete job applications, do research for schoolwork, attend virtual doctor appointments, complete applications for services, and so much more," said Mayor Mattie Parker. "This is a huge step in the right direction, and the City is committed to executing on more long-term projects that will increase Internet accessibility for more residents."

"As business, community, and government leaders, it is incumbent upon us to work together to solve historic digital inequities," said Gary DePreta, Area Vice President for State, Local Governments, and Education at Cisco. "Achieving ubiquitous Internet takes a village. The City of Fort Worth's innovation in this area and their commitment to partnering with private sector companies like Cisco and Presidio, the local school district, and the neighborhood associations, showcases the art of the possible when we work together united under the common goal of leaving no one behind."

"The value of technology like Cisco Ultra-Reliable Wireless Backhaul is that it can provide connectivity to communities relatively quickly and ensure neighborhoods are not left behind as we work toward delivering city fiber buildout," said Kevin Gunn, Chief Technology Officer, City of Fort Worth. "Cisco and Presidio's ability to adapt to our needs, tailor the technology solutions, and co-create alongside us demonstrates the power of public and private sector partnership."

The Fort Worth neighborhood Wi-Fi initiative is an initial three-to-five-year solution to increase Wi-Fi access as part of a broader strategy underway to deliver fiber availability across the city, an investment where fiber assets can prove beneficial for 30-50 years. Cisco and Presidio partnered with the city to design an architecture to achieve the highest possible saturation, with neighborhoods ranging from 55% to 90% saturation, deploying Cisco Ultra-Reliable Wireless Backhaul. The five neighborhoods were selected as part of Fort Worth's Neighborhood Improvement Strategy which devotes additional resources to the neighborhoods most in need.

With deployment scheduled to be completed this fall, the City of Fort Worth's neighborhood Wi-Fi is an extension of the *CFW-Guest* Wi-Fi network that is free and currently available at libraries and community centers.

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