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# Mayor de Blasio Announces Public Launch of LinkNYC Program, Largest and Fastest Free Municipal Wi-Fi Network in the World

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Video available at: <http://youtu.be/9GjJr7bXdNA>

Mayor de Blasio Hosts Press Conference



***First LinkNYC kiosks replacing payphones throughout the City are now fully functional –offering superfast Wi-Fi network, free domestic phone calls, USB charging ports, tablet for web browsing, and emergency services***

***LinkNYC adds to City’s efforts to bridge digital divide, with more than 7,500 free Wi-Fi kiosks coming across all five boroughs***

**NEW YORK**—Mayor de Blasio, Counsel to the Mayor Maya Wiley, DoITT Commissioner Anne Roest and representatives from CityBridge today announced the public launch of LinkNYC, which is transforming the City’s old payphones into Wi-Fi kiosks to create the world’s largest and fastest free public Wi-Fi network. These kiosks, called ‘Links,’ will provide New Yorkers with an incredibly fast, secure and private Wi-Fi network with a 150-foot radius, free domestic calling, two USB charging ports, a tablet for accessing the internet, and a red 911 button to contact emergency services. Overall, at least at 7,500 Links – and as many as 10,000 – will be installed across the five boroughs.

“LinkNYC is the Wi-Fi network New Yorkers deserve: the largest, fastest municipal Wi-Fi network in the world – and you won’t need to insert a quarter in the slot, because it’s completely free,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “LinkNYC brings us a couple steps closer to our goal of leveling the playing field and providing every New Yorker with access to the most important tool of the 21st century.”

Following today’s launch, Links will be installed and activated on a rolling basis, with over 500 kiosks in all five boroughs by the end of July, and over 4,500 by mid-2019. Link deployment will follow the installation of high-speed fiber optic cables along “corridors” through the city. Users will be able to stay connected with superfast Wi-Fi, even as they move through the five boroughs. The Administration worked closely with the Borough Presidents to determine a guaranteed number of Links in each borough – as outlined in the franchise agreement with CityBridge – to ensure this project would reach neighborhoods across the five boroughs. Some of the first areas to see Links by July include St. George, Staten Island; Jamaica, Queens; South Bronx; and Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn.

In November 2014, following a competitive bid process, the de Blasio Administration announced the selection of CityBridge – a consortium of companies that includes Intersection, Qualcomm, and CIVIQ Smartscales – to develop and operate the first-of-its-kind LinkNYC network, bringing the world’s fastest municipal Wi-Fi to millions of New Yorkers and visitors. The five-borough network is funded entirely through advertising revenues, will be built at no-cost to taxpayers, create new local jobs and generate more than \$500 million in revenue for the City.

LinkNYC will offer an encrypted network for HotSpot 2.0-enabled devices, making it the first encrypted public Wi-Fi network of this scale to add a critical layer of protection to personal data. The de Blasio Administration and CityBridge have also created a customer-first privacy policy that ensures personal information is never shared or sold for third party use. Each Link will have at least 24 hours of back-up battery power to enable 911 calling capability in the event of the loss of commercial power.

“Today New York becomes the second largest tech sector city with the fastest free Wi-Fi in the world,” said **Counsel to the Mayor Maya Wiley**. “And today is the day we take a bite out of the broadband bill for New Yorkers, at no cost to the taxpayers. With this hotspot, this city takes an important step toward a fairer distribution of broadband service. We know that low income New Yorkers, particularly African American and Latino residents, rely on their smartphones to get online. And now New Yorkers can reduce some of that broadband bill, no matter their zip code, at no cost to taxpayers, as LinkNYC kiosks begin to roll out over the city and eventually to all five boroughs. LinkNYC will simply make New York a fairer 21st Century City.”

“LinkNYC is a true, five-borough project that touches communities citywide, builds capacity and stands as one the largest investments in public broadband infrastructure in City history,” said **DoITT Commissioner Anne Roest**. “This transformational project is an important step towards Mayor de Blasio’s goal of providing every resident and business access to affordable, reliable, high-speed broadband service by 2025, and DoITT is honored to work in support of that effort.”

“LinkNYC is an innovative program that will provide free internet access to New Yorkers in thousands of places across the city,” said **Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. “The availability of internet service remains an important issue, which is why the Council has worked to make internet access publicly available to more New Yorkers through increased funding to our city’s library systems. LinkNYC takes another step by providing Wi-Fi hotspots all across the five boroughs to make internet accessibility more inclusive for all.”

“Wireless internet is the key public utility for the digital age. It’s hard to overstate how revolutionary delivering free, accessible Wi-Fi to New York City’s neighborhoods will be,” said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. “I thank Mayor de Blasio for working with me and my fellow borough presidents to improve the LinkNYC plan, by incorporating community input on where the access points should go, and placing more high-speed hotspots in northern Manhattan and other neighborhoods outside the core business district.”

“Reliable, high-speed wireless connections are now fundamental to our economy and our entire civil society. We depend on these connections to communicate with family and friends, purchase goods and services, manage our finances, and access important information at anytime, anywhere. By expanding access to the Internet from thousands of sites in our city, LinkNYC will keep New Yorkers connected. I look forward to continued work on key facets of the LinkNYC rollout, including community input on the siting of Wi-Fi kiosks and the investment of revenue into digital infrastructure improvements, that I have been committed to advancing through my role on our City’s Franchise and Concession Review Committee,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams**.

“Our mobile devices, tablets, and computers have become an integral part of our lives,” said **Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.** “We fought hard to make sure a digital divide was not created in this city, making sure all five boroughs would benefit from being able to access high-speed Internet through the LinkNYC program. I want to thank Mayor de Blasio, Counsel to the Mayor Maya Wiley, DoITT Commissioner Anne Roest and representatives from CityBridge for launching LinkNYC, the largest and fastest free public Wi-Fi network in the world, and I look forward to its continued expansion across my borough and throughout the underserved communities across this city.”

“Free public internet access is more than just a leisurely perk. It’s an indicator of economic growth, recognized potential and a way to help bridge the Digital Divide already predisposed to income inequalities. Thanks to the MOU between City Hall and the FCRC over a year ago, the plan includes equitable access, a formalized siting agreement and a process for community input. In Queens, as part of the Jamaica Now Action Plan also unveiled last year with the Mayor’s administration, we were especially pleased to have bumped the Downtown Jamaica Corridor up in the priority rollout schedule of LinkNYC. Folks are thrilled that free, citywide public Wi-Fi is well on its way,” said **Queens Borough President Melinda Katz**.

“As cities everywhere look for ways to reimagine infrastructure and create more responsive services, LinkNYC sets a new global standard by providing valuable public utilities at no cost to New Yorkers while generating new revenue for our City through a groundbreaking advertising platform,” said **Scott Goldsmith, President of Media at Intersection**. “We applaud Mayor de Blasio and the entire administration for the vision and steadfast commitment to a new connected future across all five boroughs of New York City.”

“Qualcomm is committed to bringing the most innovative technologies to the forefront of the smart cities and industrial internet space. We are proud to be a member of CityBridge and involved in such a visionary project here in New York City. We look forward to seeing the positive impact that LinkNYC has on the daily lives of city residents and visitors,” said **Derek Aberle, President of Qualcomm Incorporated**. “We hope this groundbreaking initiative signals a major step toward addressing the digital divide and will inspire other cities to reimagine their infrastructure.”

“CIVIQ Smartscapes is proud to be a part of the team responsible for bringing the LinkNYC network to New York City and the world. Together, we’ve created a new concept in urban infrastructure that delivers the same sort of critical communications services for the 21st century that first public payphones did for

the 20th century. As the structural engineers and manufacturer behind the Link kiosk, we're excited to be building this new New York City icon," said **Brad Gleeson, Chief Operating Officer at CIVIQ Smartscares**.

"Vonage has always believed in disrupting the status quo to deliver technology that enhances lives and provides a better way to communicate," said **Pablo Calamera Chief Technology Officer at Vonage**. "We are pleased to provide thousands of access points with technology that enables free phone calls to help establish a new standard of communication that will enable the people and visitors of New York City to stay connected to their family, friends and colleagues no matter where they are."

"Just like the smartphone, we'll look back on the world before LinkNYC and wonder how we ever lived without it," said **Chief Technology Officer for the City of New York Minerva Tantoco**. "LinkNYC proves that New York City is 'Open for Innovation' by assuring that technology in public spaces serves a public purpose – increasing equity and access. What's important is not just the tech, but improving the lives of everyday New Yorkers."

"LinkNYC changes the paradigm for connectivity and communication in a 21st century urban environment. This ambitious public-private partnership has transformed a relic of New York's streetscape into yet another leading example of our city's work to be the most tech-friendly, innovative and equitable in the world," said **Chief Digital Officer for the City of New York Jessica Singleton**.

"With the launch of LinkNYC, we can say goodbye to the ugly old payphones and hello to a state-of-the art, modern communications system," said **Council Member James Vacca, Chair of the Committee on Technology**. "Who could argue with free Wi-Fi? LinkNYC is going to save New Yorkers a bundle when it comes to data plans. I know I plan on taking advantage of the service! I thank Mayor de Blasio for his efforts to make free municipal Wi-Fi a reality for all New Yorkers."

"Wi-Fi has become a necessity in our daily lives. Innovative services like LinkNYC will revolutionize the way people use Wi-Fi, empowering people in entire neighborhoods and municipalities to take advantage of all the resources that the Internet offers them," said **Edgar Figueroa, president and CEO of the Wi-Fi Alliance**. "LinkNYC leverages the latest and most robust Wi-Fi technologies to deliver a seamless experience at speeds much faster than most household Internet connections, enabling a rich interaction among people and communities. LinkNYC is an excellent example of a forward-thinking approach to bringing fast and affordable connectivity to everybody."

"We are thrilled to welcome the first LinkNYC kiosks to Union Square, a neighborhood that is a magnet for innovative tech companies that are modernizing our City's economy," said **Union Square Partnership Executive Director Jennifer Falk**. "LinkNYC brings our public spaces into the 21st century, giving access to all and strengthening our great city's place as a global leader in technology, communication and media."

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