



TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
MEETING DATE: JUNE 15, 2026
FROM: TOM DUBOIS, CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: MICROTRENCHING & ROADWAY REHABILITATION EXCEPTION
FOR PROPOSED UNDERGROUND FIBER OPTIC ENCROACHMENT
PERMIT

RECOMMENDATION:

Council approves the resolution to allow an exception for the CVIN Fiber Optic backbone to use a microtrenching construction method where needed.

BACKGROUND:

The Central Valley Independent Network (CVIN) operates a 2,500-mile fiber-optic middle-mile infrastructure spanning 23 counties in Northern and Central California. It functions as a critical backbone to bridge the digital divide, providing the infrastructure necessary for economic survival, public safety, and educational equity in historically underserved regions.

1. California Statewide Strategy

- Statewide Anchor Connections: Partners with CENIC to link K-12 schools, community colleges, universities, and local government nodes.
- Public Safety & Health: Supports infrastructure for 911 emergency centers and rural telehealth systems.
- Economic Competitiveness: Offers open-access architecture enabling local ISPs to deliver high-speed, 10 Gbps services to homes, businesses, and cell towers.

2. Rural City Impact

- Ends Digital Isolation: Bridges the gap left by major commercial providers who bypass low-density populations.
- Drives Local Industry: Attracts remote workers and empowers agriculture and manufacturing with cloud and monitoring technologies.
- Prevents Population Decline: Keeps businesses and residents from relocating to major metropolitan areas.
- Equitable Access: Unlocks remote learning and virtual healthcare for isolated residents.

3. Future Alignment - CVIN aligns with the California Department of Technology's broader initiatives to expand middle-mile infrastructure and advance statewide broadband availability.

The CVIN has been planning to expand the current backbone in Jackson through to the City of Plymouth by installing underground fiber optic facilities from the City of Plymouth to the City of Jackson (see attached vicinity map). CVIN has subcontracted the construction oversight of this project to Volcano Telephone Company. Volcano Telephone had a pre-bid meeting in early March with construction contractors and local representatives from the City of Sutter Creek, City of Amador City and Amador County to field review the project design and go over City and County roadway rehabilitation standards.

To enable future middle mile and premise connections to the most residences, businesses, schools, and our government buildings, we requested the route be modified to go down Old Highway 49. Volcano Telecomm obliged and redesigned to bring the backbone fiber optic on this route.

In mid-April, Volcano representatives requested a meeting with City of Sutter Creek and Amador City representatives to determine if other construction methods and reduced roadway rehabilitation would be acceptable in each City as bids for the project within City limits came in at approximately 3.5 million dollars and were much higher than anticipated. The higher cost is threatening the viability of this strategic project that is core to future economic development plans.

DISCUSSION:

The City of Sutter Creek recently updated roadway trenching standards and roadway rehabilitation standards in conjunction with a roadway moratorium in October 2025 to protect our newly paved road. These updated City Improvement Standards do not contain construction standards for microtrenching as this construction method is not common in the area. In areas within City limits that are not proposed for microtrenching, Volcano Telephone is proposing to directional drill. This construction method is more common and requires digging 4' x 4' x 4' deep bore pits and drilling horizontally to install conduits and generally results in less disturbance of asphalt concrete compared to open cut trenching.

Volcano Telephone is requesting that the City allow for pavement rehabilitation work to revert back to what they were (a one-foot pavement repair past the excavation limit on all sides) prior to the current City Standards. Volcano Telephone estimates that the microtrenching and directional drilling work with the previous roadway rehabilitation standards will save them approximately \$600,000. If the City does not make an exception for Volcano Telephone, they have indicated they will redesign the facilities to follow the Sutter Creek bypass and eliminate the portion through downtown Sutter Creek and Amador City.

None of the proposed route impacts roads that were recently repaved. We are recommending that Council approve the Microtrenching Exception

BUDGET IMPACT:

N/A. Construction inspection costs by the City Staff would be reimbursed by the applicant.

Attachments:

- Exhibit 1 - Vicinity Map
- Exhibit 2 - Proposed Microtrenching Locations
- Exhibit 3 - Proposed Microtrenching Detail
- Exhibit 4 - Resolution