MEMORANDUM

To:	Thom Sheridan, City Manager
From:	Jena Stasik, Community Relations Manager
CC:	Jeff Knoblauch, Assistant City Manager, Greg Hannan, Community Development Director, Paul Leedham, IT Director, Will Ersing, Assistant IT Director, Katie Behnke Economic Development Manager
Date:	February 11, 2025
Subject:	AARP 2025 Community Challenge Grant

PURPOSE

AARP has awarded over $20 million dollars since 2017 to 1,000 communities through the nationwide AARP Livable Communities initiative. Funded projects help communities make immediate improvements and jump-start long-term progress in support of residents of all ages. Examples of awarded projects include connectivity projects, such as wi-fi enhancement. Awards can range to $25,000 with the average award being $10,000 to $12,000.

PROJECT AND BUDGET

In January 2025, Assistant IT Director Will Ersing submitted a Staff Report to the City Manager highlighting the current state of connectivity within downtown and recommended infrastructure upgrades as current equipment ages and demand for public wi-fi grows (See Attachment A). The two projects highlighted were:

1. **First Area**: Primary green spaces, such as the Clocktower Green, Gazebo Green, Baldwin-Buss House Merino Green (Park Lane), and the First and Main Green.
   a. **Size**: Approximately 264,000 square feet.
   b. **Cost**: Estimated at $25,000.
   c. **Infrastructure**: Leveraging existing infrastructure to reduce costs and accelerate the timeline.
2. **Second Area**: All outdoor spaces in the downtown area, including N. Main St, the entirety of First and Main, the Boy Scout Cabin Green, and the green east of the cabin.
   a. **Size**: Approximately 500,000 square feet.
   b. **Cost**: An additional $65,000.

The "First Area" would be an ideal consideration for the AARP 2025 Community Challenge grant as the project could be completely or partially funded, implemented within the calendar year, and solve the problem of aging equipment that currently supports temporary special events.

TIMELINE

First Area: Partial implementation within 3-4 weeks, full completion in three months.

Second Area: Substantial completion within 6 months.
Both projects would meet the grant guidelines for project completion timeline.

CONCLUSION

City staff recommends application submittal to the AARP 2025 Community Challenge Grant for public wi-fi infrastructure upgrade to the primary green spaces.