

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO PUT INTERNET DATA COLLECTION SURVEY ON CITY'S WEBSITE

BACKGROUND:

At the workshop on March 21, representatives from several Internet providers presented information about the services currently offered in Ames and plans for future expansion. During this workshop, several members of the public commented on their inability to access internet services that met their needs. Additionally, several were frustrated by what they perceived to be the lack of options available in their neighborhood.

Service providers appeared to be sympathetic to residents, but responded that it is difficult to make business decisions based on feedback from only a few customers. They suggested that assistance gathering data would help them make more educated decisions on how to offer expanded Internet options.

The Council suggested City staff research a mechanism to aggregate potential demand for Internet service in a way that could include geographic information. By working with our GIS specialists, the City staff could create a survey that can be linked to our website. This program would allow information to be aggregated to a dashboard for quick analytics. This would be a way to quickly collect information from residents about their satisfaction levels with Internet access, dependability, reliability, and options, and consider that data by geographic area. This is a link to a survey prototype:

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/c1ded8064976436483d5d60ae18c4fa9>

At the recent Eco Fair, participants were asked to answer a series of questions about their Eco Fair experience and provide an address. This generated easy to use data. This same technique could be used for Internet access questions. Putting a survey on our City website and directing residents to the link would be a cost-effective way of achieving the Council's directive of aggregating data regarding citizen Internet expectations and concerns.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve putting the internet services survey on the City's website and ask residents to respond with their feedback.
2. Do not approve the request.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Many residents view the internet as such an important part of daily life that it is considered a necessity. Internet access is essential for some residents who work from home, and many school age children in Ames require internet access to complete homework. Surveying Ames residents about their internet needs is something new, but the City could easily offer an online survey that that would offer quick feedback. Once gathered, the information can be made available to local internet providers to assist them with future service decisions.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1.