

ITEM # 23aεb  
DATE 01-08-2008

### COUNCIL ACTION FORM

**SUBJECT:** REQUEST TO APPROVE WI-FI PILOT AND ISSUANCE OF WI-FI SERVICES REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

**BACKGROUND:**

Based on direction from City Council related to meeting the goal to facilitate one community through both physical and relationship connections, City staff gathered information on options for wireless Internet service in the City of Ames. On October 10, 2006, the City Council directed staff to conduct a wireless study to review the following:

- The feasibility and options for implementing a city-wide Wi-Fi system.
- The cost to implement and operate a series of Wi-Fi hot spots in public locations in the City.

City staff prepared an RFP and entered into an agreement with Columbia Telecommunications Corporation to conduct the study. The study was presented at the City Council meeting on December 11, 2007. Based on results of the study, staff recommended:

- That the City Council not pursue the implementation of a city-wide Wi-Fi system.
- That the City Council consider two options for implementation of a series of Wi-Fi hot spots, funded by the City, with Wi-Fi access provided free of charge. Options are based on the use of existing City infrastructure and review of expected public use in different locations.
  - Option 1 - Implement Wi-Fi hotspots in locations with existing or planned City network infrastructure and 11 locations identified as having a high priority based on potential use.

*Option 1 - Implement Priority Locations*

<b>Site</b>	<b>Implementation Costs</b>	<b>Annual Operating Costs</b>
<u>Base Infrastructure</u>	\$30,800	\$11,975
<u>Hot spot sites with existing or planned City network infrastructure:</u>		
City Hall		
Ice Arena		
Community Center		
Municipal Pool	\$39,835	\$32,270
Aquatic Center		
<u>Additional WiFi hotspot locations:</u>		
Campustown Court		
Brookside Park		
Tom Evans Plaza		
Country Gables Park		
Ada Hayden Heritage Park		
Ames Youth Sports Complex	\$150,260	\$27,705
Bandshell Park		
Emma McCarthy Lee Park		
Moore Memorial Park		
Daley Park and Greenbelt		
Inis Grove Park		
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Total	\$220,895	\$71,950

- Option 2 - Implement Wi-Fi hotspots in locations with existing or planned City network infrastructure and four pilot locations. Implementation cost estimates were increased after further review of cost to provide backbone connections to these locations.

*Option 2 – Implementation of a Pilot Project*

<b>Site</b>	<b>Implementation Costs</b>	<b>Annual Operating Costs</b>
<u>Base Infrastructure</u>	\$30,800	\$11,975
<u>Hot spot sites with existing or planned City network infrastructure:</u>		
City Hall		
Ice Arena		
Community Center	\$39,835	\$32,270
Municipal Pool		
Aquatic Center		
<u>Pilot WiFi hotspot locations:</u>		
Tom Evans Plaza		
Brookside Park		
Campustown Court	\$57,410	\$11,913
Ames Youth Sports Complex		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$128,045</b>	<b>\$56,158</b>

Given the uncertainty of the popularity of primarily outdoor use, City Council directed staff to focus on Option 2 – Implement Wi-Fi hotspots in locations with existing or planned City network infrastructure and four pilot locations.

Because City owned network infrastructure is already in place or planned in City Hall, the Ice Arena, Community Center, Municipal Pool, and Aquatic Center and Wi-Fi in those locations will serve both public access and City business access, the best option would be for the City to own and operate WiFi access points in these locations. Therefore, City staff is proposing to implement Base Infrastructure and City Hall, Ice Arena, Community Center, Municipal Pool, and the Aquatic Center locations. This option has an estimated \$70,635 capital cost and \$44,245 annual operating expense. City staff could economically operate these access points as part of the network services already provided in these locations and would likely be able to reduce estimated operating costs.

For the proposed Wi-Fi hotspot locations, the City does not have infrastructure in place, therefore Wi-Fi service at these locations may be more economically and efficiently provided by a private sector business with infrastructure in the area. To evaluate implementation of Wi-Fi in the hotspot locations, City Staff will issue an RFP for Wi-Fi hot spot services. City staff will compare the RFP proposals with the Columbia Telecommunications Corporation cost estimates and provide the

City Council with the most cost effective recommendation for providing Wi-Fi hot spots at pilot locations.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Authorize City staff to implement City Hall, Ice Arena, Community Center, Municipal Pool, and the Aquatic Center Wi-Fi hot spots at an estimated \$70,635 capital cost from Local Option Sales Tax balance and \$44,245 annual operating expense. In addition, direct staff to issue an RFP for hot spot services at Tom Evans Plaza, Brookside Park, Campus Town Court, and the Ames Youth Sports Complex. Staff will report to City Council recommendations based on the RFP and Columbia Telecommunications Corporation cost estimates.
2. Refer back to staff to review other possible implementation options.

**MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

The pilot locations will test the feasibility and public utilization of Wi-Fi hot spots before expanding the project.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, authorizing City staff to implement City Hall, Ice Arena, Community Center, Municipal Pool, and the Aquatic Center Wi-Fi hot spots at an estimated \$70,635 capital cost from Local Option Sales Tax balance and \$44,245 annual operating expense. In addition, direct staff to issue an RFP for hot spot services at Tom Evans Plaza, Brookside Park, Campus Town Court, and the Ames Youth Sports Complex. Staff will report to City Council recommendations based on the RFP and Columbia Telecommunications Corporation cost estimates.