

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO. D(1)

AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

MEETING DATE: September 21, 2004

TITLE: Update on Wireless Implementation Plans

DEPARTMENT: Management Services	PUBLIC HEARING: YES ____ NO <u>x</u>
ATTACHMENTS: A. Resolution Accepting Report on Wireless Implementation Efforts	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Andy Vogel, IT Manager, 918-7305 L. Bingham Roenigk, Assistant Town Manager, 918-7300

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this agenda item is to inform the Board of Aldermen on the next steps in the ongoing expansion of wireless implementation (the tocwireless.net project). The adopted budget sets aside \$5,000 to continue the work begun in creating a wireless downtown area. Other efforts include improvements to the Town's internal technology creating wireless access points for departments including the Police Department and the Planning Department.

INFORMATION

The Town of Carrboro recently expanded the free, public wireless coverage to include the lawn area (and beyond) around Weaver Street Market. This installation offers WiFi-compatible wireless Internet access to people gathering in downtown Carrboro. The installation consists of six wireless access points and six specialized antennas mounted in various locations around the Weaver Street Market area. A map displaying WiFi compatible public wireless access spaces in Carrboro may be found at the project's website - <http://www.tocwireless.net>. This web site may also be found from a link on the town's main web site's top page. Weaver Street Market and N.R. Milian & Associates were extremely cooperative and helpful during the entire expansion project. They lent manpower and IT expertise to the project. Weaver Street Market is donating the needed bandwidth for Internet access which represents an ongoing monthly cost of \$500 - \$700 that the Town does not have to absorb.

With ongoing and future efforts, it is envisioned that the Town will "seed" the wireless effort by purchasing a limited number of wireless access points, firewalls, and cabling for key locations around the downtown area. Creating a usable and real wireless presence would provide immediate benefit to the Town's residents while spawning further volunteer initiatives from the business and residential communities.

Providing wireless access can also be a useful marketing tool, a potential draw to high-tech firms and their employees, as well as providing free access to valuable resources available on the Internet and the Town's website. The tocwireless.net is the wireless infrastructure (free public access & Wi-Fi compatible) connecting residents, visitors and business commuters in public spaces to the Internet. The current thrust of the project is to make the majority of the downtown area wireless capable which will include a wireless corridor connecting the Carr Mill area with Town Hall.

Future implementation plans include the following public wireless access points and specialized antennas for the following locations:

09-21-2004#5

Central Downtown Coverage:

- South side of Century Center, this will provide wireless access along Main Street from the Armadillo Grill to somewhere past Wendy's. This should complete a central downtown coverage area created by the triangular intersection of North Greensboro St., Weaver St. and Main St.
- Town Commons, this will provide wireless access to the Town Commons and the majority of the Main St. and Weaver St. intersection and beyond.
- The patio area located in Carr Mill. This will provide wireless access to the area between CVS Pharmacy and Elmo's (and beyond).

In addition, private access points, antennas and mountings are planned for the following locations to benefit Town Staff efficiency (specifically the Police and Planning Departments).

- Back side of Town Hall, this will provide coverage to Planning.
- Town Commons, this will be mounted in conjunction with the public antenna for mainly Police coverage with some Planning coverage.
- Back side of the Century Center, this will provide coverage for the Police.

It is anticipated that this effort will be completed by December 31, 2004.

Longer-term initiatives include the following:

- A wireless corridor connecting the wireless downtown area to the wireless Town Hall and Town Commons areas via Weaver Street. Work will begin in the latter part of the current fiscal year and will be completed in the following fiscal year. Mast-mounted antennas and wireless access points along Weaver St. will be placed near the Town's existing fiber-optic pull boxes. The installation will make use of existing conduit runs and pull boxes (from the fiber-optic infrastructure) along Weaver St.
- The Town Manager will facilitate conversation with Main Street Properties LLC to make available public wireless access at the future 300 E. Main St. development project. The goal would be to have public wireless Internet access branded with the tocwireless.net SSID.

In all cases, the thrust of the wireless implementation project is to provide for effective technology in conducting town operations and free wireless access to places and spaces where the community congregates, connecting residents, visitors and business commuters in public spaces to the Internet, making Carrboro a place of destination and business.

FISCAL IMPACT: The project will be within the adopted budget amount of \$5,000, with no additional operating impact in the following year.

ADMINISTRATION'S RECOMMENDATION:

Accept report on updating the Board on the Town's wireless implementation plans