



COMMUNITY SERVICES – IT Innovation
TOWN OF NEWMARKET
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December 8, 2016

**COMMUNITY SERVICES – IT INNOVATION
INFORMATION REPORT #: 2016-31**

TO: Mayor Van Bynen and Members of Council
SUBJECT: Wi-Fi Service (Parks)
ORIGIN: Community Services - IT Innovation

PREAMBLE

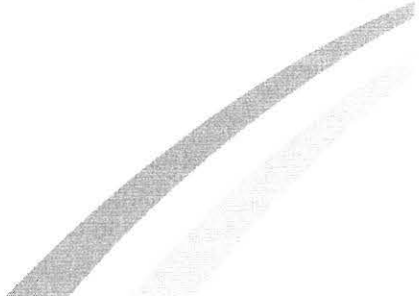
In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any Member of Council may request this Information Report be placed on an upcoming Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion.

COMMENTS

This report serves to provide Council with an update of the provision of Wi-Fi services in public facilities project to date as well as to provide information on extending Wi-Fi services to open spaces such as municipally owned parks.

Wi-Fi is offered at all Town facilities for no charge to anyone at the location. People do not have to log in or provide any sort of credential in order to access the Wi-Fi service. The service is monitored only for usage statistics but we do not monitor sites visited or length of time on sites. The internet service does block “extreme” sites with the understanding these are public facilities and are used by customers of all ages. It should be noted the Wi-Fi capacity is limited as it is simply the excess capacity of the Town’s own paid service that is being provided for public use. If more service is required for Town business, then less capacity may be available for free public use.

Budget has been provided in the IT Capital Budgets from 2014 – 2016 to provide for the installation of the required hardware and software to offer this service. To date, Wi-Fi service is provided for free at the following locations:

- Town Hall
 - Operations Centre
 - Magna Community Centre
 - Museum
 - Ray Twinney Complex
 - Newmarket Theatre
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- Seniors Complex
- Youth Centre
- Old Town Hall
- Riverwalk Commons – indoors and the outdoor space

LOOKING FORWARD TO WI-FI IN PARKS

The cost of providing Wi-Fi service in parks or any public space would include both the capital budget to deploy the equipment outdoors and the operating budget to maintain (hardware support and licence costs) and manage the network once installed. The full cost and magnitude of the project would be determined by a detailed network design, to be completed by an outside expert, to define how best to achieve an appropriate signal strength in the area (or zone). Signal strength can be impacted by different factors such as the number of people accessing the network, type of activity (ie video vs data), background noise in the outdoors environment, trees and structures in the Wi-Fi zone and the actual size of the area to be covered. Once all this information is collected and plan is designed, details such as number of Wi-Fi access points, controllers, wiring and electrical work would be itemized and costed.

There are challenges to consider with expanding the free Wi-Fi service such as the limited capacity of the current network, cost to maintain and manage the expanded network, content filtering as it is applied, as well as the potential liability of providing the service in public spaces. It should be noted that the current free Wi-Fi service is provided without support, meaning there can be no expectation of immediate help if the service is disrupted. The security protection is limited and there is no storage of any user data generated on the network.

BUSINESS PLAN AND STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGES

Public Wi-Fi provides many opportunities for the municipality to enhance communication services for residents, businesses and visitors. It can support community events such as sports tournaments, arts/culture events, emergency services and for general internet access, in particular for those who may not have access to the internet elsewhere. Improving access to the internet supports several of Council's Strategic priorities such as supporting the implementation of affordable broadband, enhancing our recreational and community facilities and engaging our changing resident demographics.

The project also relates to the **Well Planned and Connected** link of the Town's Community Vision- implementing a program that reflects telecommunications infrastructure and policies for an increasingly wired world. It also reflects the **Well-Respected** link by discovering innovative and creative solutions and promoting engagement in civic affairs.

BUDGET IMPACT

The cost for the consulting services to develop the network design is estimated to be less than \$20,000, depending on the number of parks to be analyzed and the size of the potential Wi-Fi zones. The scope of work would include the network design and a report identifying the recommended equipment and services necessary to achieve the signal strength required within the parks. An estimate on these costs would be premature until the network design is completed. The budget for this project is not included in the existing 2016 IT budget or the proposed 2017 IT budget at this time.

CONTACT


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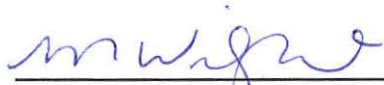
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