



WILDWOOD®

March 11, 2019

The Honorable City Council
City of Wildwood, Missouri
16860 Main Street
Wildwood, Missouri 63040

Re: Update on the City's Rural Internet Project

Council Members:

The Department continues to work on several different initiatives relating to the extension of high-speed internet service to the underserved and non-served areas of Wildwood. Many of these initiatives have been presented to the City Council over the past year, via these regular updates from the Department, with the major current activities summarized below for the purposes of this report. These summaries are as follows:

⇒ **Consultant Update on Assigned Tasks of Internet Study**

The Department and the consultant have scheduled bi-monthly, conference calls to update the progress on the project and associated timeline of it. The updated timeline is attached, which was also provided to each City Council Member via e-mail, after its February 25, 2019 meeting. This past week, the Department received a letter from the consultants that explains its understanding of the City's goals that led to its engagement of this firm and a draft Table of Contents for the future report that will be prepared by it, when the study is complete. This letter is attached to this update. The Department will also provide this item to the members of the Rural Internet Access Committee (RIAC) for its consideration as well.

⇒ **Fiber Installation by Bays ET – Hawks Rest Subdivision**

Bays ET has begun this work and completed the installation of the conduit and fiber optics along State Route 100 from its backhaul location in Pacific, Missouri (its offices and headquarters). Bays ET has been coordinating the future work with the Homeowners Association of this subdivision, and recently received the required Grading Permit from the City for it as well. The work is anticipated to carry forward through March and April, with service options planned by the beginning of May. This approach to high-speed internet access is exciting and could very well end up being the template that is used throughout rural Wildwood.

⇒ **New Pole Installations for Bays ET and Wisper ISP**

The Department of Planning has received in the last two (2) weeks reports from the two (2) wireless providers offering services in the City of Wildwood. The information the two (2) providers offered to the City was the number of potential leads that are now within the networks' ranges with the newly installed or requested poles the City has implemented or being asked to install. The numbers of potential new customers based upon the two (2) new poles that were recently installed by the City on Rocky Ridge Road and Old Wild Horse Creek Road is almost four hundred (400) in total. The requested poles that would be new installations,

five (5) in total, that are being requested by Wisper ISP would serve approximately thirty (30) households in total.

The two (2) poles that have been installed are being utilized by Bays ET. Bays ET has contacted these four hundred (400) leads already at this time. The intent of these contacts is to offer services and ensure any household that seeks improved internet service can have that option to consider.

The Department certainly appreciates the efforts of both providers, but does need direction on the Wisper ISP request for five (5) new pole installations. These installations will approach \$75,000.00 for the planned thirty (30) potential leads associated with the selected locations. This amount is substantial and the Department is hesitant to proceed without direction from the City Council in this regard. Of these five (5) poles, two (2) of them will only serve two (2) or three (3) households. By its request, the Department certainly is not minimizing the need for these households to have an option for internet access, but it had hoped the pole locations would be based upon the greatest number of households as possible. The limited number of households effected by these installations brings into question other alternatives that might be equally or more costly, but reach a greater number of potential users.

⇒ **Previously Installed Poles – Orrville Road, by the Meridien Subdivision**

The Department has engaged Mercury Communications and Construction, Inc. to complete the painting and lighting of the pole located on Orrville Road. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is requiring this work and only includes the portion of the pole that is above the surrounding tree line in its vicinity. This work was to be completed in 2018, but has been delayed by other efforts to address residents lacking high-speed internet access at this time.

⇒ **Other Efforts – Meeting Results, Budget, etc.**

The Department also continues to assist individual subdivisions and residents with service requests with either Bays ET or Wisper ISP, along with providing information and guidance on extending Charter Communications (a.k.a. Spectrum) to underserved or unserved areas of Wildwood.

If any of the City Council members should have questions or comments in this regard, please feel free to contact the Department of Planning at (636) 458-0440. Thank you for your continued support of this project and the efforts to address the needs of rural Wildwood residents.

Respectfully submitted,

CITY OF WILDWOOD



Joe Vujnich, Director
Department of Planning

Cc: The Honorable James R. Bowlin, Mayor
Steve Cross, Co-Interim City Administrator
Rural Internet Access Committee Members
John A. Young, City Attorney
Kathy Arnett, Assistant Director of Planning and Parks
Chris Bay, David Crabtree, and Nathan Stooke, Service Providers – Bays ET and Wisper ISP



Date: March 6, 2019
To: Kathy Arnett and Joe Vujnich, City of Wildwood
From: Tom Asp, CTC
Re: Study Goals and Table of Contents

Following our recent onsite strategy meeting, this memorandum provides our understanding of the goals of our engagement with the City and a draft Table of Contents for your review.

Goals of the Study

The City has articulated a goal of helping solve the substantial broadband deficits in parts of the city, particularly in the semi-rural western areas. The City has further stated a willingness to potentially commit some public funds to support the provision of service, so long as this funding is scalable, future-proof, and results in tangible assets that make the most difference to the largest number of people.

To date the City has built poles to support two wireless internet service providers (WISPs) in some areas of the western part of the City. But the local terrain, large lot sizes and spread-out development characteristics, and foliage have made it challenging, technically and economically, to provide widespread coverage. The City now recognizes that it needs to explore new approaches.

Because of the challenging economics, private ISPs are unlikely to invest in ubiquitous broadband infrastructure in Wildwood. But the City might pursue less costly strategies such as investment in middle-mile fiber to support and encourage ISPs to expand their services.

It is worth noting at the outset that the City likely will not be eligible for federal grants and possibly state grants. The City's relatively high family income—and the fact that it is considered part of the St. Louis metropolitan area from the perspective of the federal government—make Wildwood ineligible for current federal programs. For example current federal grant opportunities generally apply only to rural and unserved areas. As a result, any commitment of public funds will need to be City funds.

Every city or other locality wishing to improve local broadband service must find the approach that matches their needs, risk-tolerance, and willingness to be involved. The report will aim to help Wildwood's leaders determine what is best for Wildwood.

This study has the following goals: