

December 21, 2005

Councilmember Paul Zerby  
Councilmember Gary Schiff  
Councilmember Sandra Colvin Roy  
Councilmember-Elect Cam Gordon  
City Hall, Room 307  
350 South 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Dear Council Members Zerby, Schiff and Colvin Roy, and Councilmember-Elect Gordon:

The Longfellow Community Council participated in a discussion with both city staff and the Institute for Local Self-Reliance at our December 15 Board Meeting to hear about the Wi-Fi initiative for Minneapolis.

In evaluating the information presented, the Board voted in favor of urging the city to open the Wi-Fi decision making process to include more citizen participation. We are asking that significant consideration be given to adopting a City-owned Wi-Fi network.

Specifically, the LCC moved that:

- The City should hold public meetings that include a discussion of ownership before making any further decisions regarding the wireless initiative.
- The City Council should initiate a feasibility study that considers public ownership of a high-speed information network, similar to those done by Saint Louis Park and other cities.
- The City Council should not enter contract negotiations with a single bidder until such a study has been completed and the results made available for public comment.

There are several models of City ownership to be considered – including full ownership and operation of the network, and owning hardware and contracting for services over the network. While financing the hardware investment may be viewed as an obstacle, we feel that this financing issue should be viewed similarly to the City's investment in roads or waterworks – a public good that is worth the cost.

The process of bidding out the contract for Wi-Fi as is currently underway, while addressing a recognized and perhaps even urgent need, may in fact end up being a short term strategy that has unforeseen long term consequences in affordable public access for the residents of Longfellow and the City.

Please act to pause the current process and include a public, accessible process to evaluate community owned Wi-Fi.

Sincerely,

Ralph Wyman  
Vice President  
LCC Board of Directors

Katie Hatt  
Executive Director

cc: Mayor R.T. Rybak  
Standish Ericcson Neighborhood Association  
Nokomis East Neighborhood Association  
Corcoran Neighborhood Organization  
Seward Neighborhood Group