



City of Long Beach
Working Together to Serve

Office of Robert Garcia **Revised**
Council Member, First District

Date: February 5, 2013

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Robert Garcia, First District
Councilmember Suja Lowenthal, Second District
Councilmember Gerrie Schipske, Fifth District
Councilmember Steven Neal, Ninth District

Subject: **WiFi in Parks – Pilot Program**

Background:

Wireless Internet access has become a standard amenity in many public spaces around the country. Parks, in particular, have become places where people expect to find wireless access. Many parks in New York, San Francisco, and other cities provide wireless access, as do many of California's State parks. Cities nationwide are providing wireless service in parks as a way to provide new services to residents and visitors.

Today's service and information-driven economy is driven by Internet connectivity. Many professionals need to be mobile and choose to spend many working hours away from the office – if they even have an office. Mobility and instant access to information and communication has become more important to many professionals than having an office or a paid staff. Young, creative members of the workforce in particular expect reliable WiFi service to be available in an urban environment.

As Long Beach continues to seek to attract creative class residents and a modern urban workforce by leading the way on technology and quality of life, wireless services must expand so that most of the City serves as a reliable means of connecting to the Internet.

Offering WiFi in some parks as a pilot program would ensure such an amenity would be sustainable and appropriate for Long Beach in the long term.

Long Beach has been named a top-ten digital city two years in a row, thanks to our investment in digital technology, as exemplified by the Go Long Beach smartphone application, our use of social media, the consolidation of document management systems, online streaming video, extended fiber optics connections, new online permits and licenses, Internet-based phone technology, virtual servers and workstations, and many other accomplishments.

Adding WiFi in parks would not only solidify our status as a digital leader, but would have the potential to attract private investment by businesses that are part of the technology sector, or depend on technology infrastructure to carry out their business model. We need to take advantage of all of our city's strengths in order to supported continued economic expansion, and adding WiFi to parks would do just that.

Recommendation: Direct the City Manager to investigate costs and benefits of including Wifi as a cost of construction as new city parks are built; investigate private/public partnerships with Wifi providers to install wireless connectivity in new and current city parks; complete report and forward to Parks & Recreation Commission in 90 days before it returns to City Council for discussion and action.

Fiscal Impact: There is no fiscal impact associated with this measure