



## Request for City Council Committee Action from the Departments of BIS and Communications

**Date:** February 14, 2008

**To:** The Honorable Robert Lilligren, Chair

**Referral to:** Committee of the Whole

**Subject:** Update report on USI Wireless' progress in constructing the citywide Wireless Minneapolis network.

**Submitted by** Lynn Willenbring \_\_\_\_\_, 673-2729  
Chief Information Officer

**Approved by** Steven Bosacker \_\_\_\_\_  
City Coordinator

**Prepared by:** Lynn Willenbring, Chief Information Officer

**Recommendation:** Receive and File.

**Permanent Review Committee (PRC) Approval – Not Applicable**

**Policy Review Group (PRG)**  
Approval \_\_\_\_ Date of Approval \_\_\_\_ Not Applicable  X

**Presenters in Committee:** Lynn Willenbring, Chief Information Officer and Sara Dietrich, Communications Director

### Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

- No financial impact (If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information).
- Action requires an appropriation increase to the \_\_\_ Capital Budget or \_\_\_ Operating Budget.
- Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase.
- Action requires use of contingency or reserves.
- Business Plan: \_\_\_\_ Action is within the plan. \_\_\_\_ Action requires a change to plan.
- Other financial impact (Explain):

## **Background/Supporting Information**

In 2006 the City of Minneapolis signed a 10-year contract with US Internet to build and manage a wireless network across the city. USI Wireless is currently in the process of constructing the wireless network.

When completed the wireless network will provide access to 95 percent of the city's land area (the remaining 5 percent includes lakes, larger parks, and golf courses). To develop this wireless network radios are mounted on city assets, such as light poles, which allows the network coverage to reach approximately the third floor of buildings. With additional equipment, building owners can bring the wireless signal into the building and all the way to the top floor of a building.

### **Overview - Project Update**

USI Wireless anticipates that the initial build-out of the network will be completed in March. Construction has been broken into six construction phases. A map (attached) produced by the company shows each of the six construction phases and also highlights areas that we are calling "challenge areas." These are places throughout Minneapolis where there are a limited number of assets on which to hang the wireless radios. Many of these are areas that have special light poles or are adjacent to parks, where there are currently no light poles. The special light poles may be decorative or they may be scheduled for replacement along parkways. Minneapolis' 7<sup>th</sup> City Council Ward has a significant number of challenge areas. These areas will be addressed before the network is considered complete, but installation of wireless radios is continuing throughout Minneapolis to gain as much coverage as possible.

Because network coverage will only reach approximately the third floor of buildings, USI Wireless will be working with interested condominium and apartment ownership groups to bring the wireless network into their buildings. Tall building management organizations are encouraged to contact USI Wireless to begin the process.

Resolving these challenges is a priority for both the City and USI Wireless. The City must be confident that when the network is complete it meets our service expectations and the contract requirements.

Since Minneapolis is one of the first cities in the country to pursue such a project, we are the first to face – and resolve – the myriad of unanticipated issues that come along with such an ambitious endeavor.