

MARIN GENERAL SERVICES AUTHORITY
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 15, 2009
TO: MGSA Board of Directors
FROM: Paul Berlant, Executive Officer
SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM G: UPDATE ON WIRELESS MARIN

Recommendation: Receive the report from CBG Communications regarding the pilot project currently underway and provide direction regarding future actions.

Background:

MGSA's consultant continues to work with the Golden Gate Bridge and Transit District to evaluate WiFi on two bus lines as a pilot project. Attached is a progress memorandum from our consultant, CBG Communications. CBG reports preliminary findings regarding a WiFi/rider initial and weekly usage surveys deployed in early October with a related demographics survey deployed in late November. Information gathering is ending as this memorandum is being written and therefore the findings are only preliminary. Early results show some interesting findings, including riders' overall satisfaction with the network is very favorable with perception of the network's speed being rated fast or moderate by over 90% of survey respondents; riders report utilizing the network to perform tasks such as banking, research, purchasing or selling merchandise, e-mailing, file sharing and obtaining news and information. Approximately 75% of respondents have said Internet access aboard the buses is important or very important to them with an additional 15% saying it is at least somewhat important (for a total of 90% indicating that this service has some level of importance to them).

As this pilot study is completed and fully reported, it is the appropriate time to evaluate the direction of this program and possible next steps. The pilot project currently underway is Task 2 of four tasks under the current contract with CBG. Tasks 3 and 4 call for the preparation and dissemination of an RFP to implement a "full-scale" system of that tested in the pilot. The work plan calls for a "go/no go" decision point by the MGSA at the end of each task. MGSA staff and BCG will return to the Board in March with recommendations for any future actions.