Community Wi-Fi Briefing

Austin Independent School District/ CapMetro/ City of Austin

Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission
June 12, 2020

Today's Briefing

The Joint Sustainability Committee adopted a Resolution in Spring 2020 to:

- Identify possible public-private partnerships and funding to expand access to the Internet for low-income communities and communities of color, which have disproportionately low-levels of access. The city should identify possible public-private partnerships and funding to either create free city-wide Wi-Fi, or free connection for income-qualified residents.

Today's Briefing

- **Updates to provide Wi-Fi Internet Access to the Austin Community**
  - *Austin Independent School District*
    - Kevin Schwartz: Chief Technology Officer
  - *Capital Metro*
    - Melissa Ortiz: Community Engagement Coordinator
    - Jane Schroter: Vice President & CIO
- **Opportunities, and City of Austin Role**
  - *City of Austin*
    - John Speirs: Program Manager
- **Next Steps**

Austin ISD

- CURRENT CONTEXT
  - Equipment
    - >45,000 of 81,000 computers (Chromebooks and iPads) deployed PK-12. Full 1:1 Fall 2020
    - 6,000 of 8,000 Internet hotspots through grants and matching grants
    - 12,000 to 17,000 estimated students will still have an unmet need for Internet
    - 130 WiFi-enabled school buses deployed during Summer Mon-Thurs until mid-afternoon
  - Summer School underway and Fall are planned to rely on partial to full online learning
  - Health, employment, education, news, transportation, access to food, etc. are all heavily impacted by this digital divide
- PLANS & OPPORTUNITIES
  - Data indicate again that the need is in "The Crescent" and requires a hybrid solution
  - Private LTE
  - Point to multi-point Wireless
  - San Antonio accelerating plans after modeling on GAATN
  - Carrier LTE service (Grant and purchased)
  - Timing is paramount

Cap Metro

- 9 locations across service area
    - 4 Housing Authority communities
    - 3 Foundation Communities sites
    - 1 East Austin College Prep
    - 1 Del Valle ISD site
    - Districts: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 9
- May 8th - Summer 2020
- WiFi Reach
    - 150-200 feet
    - 25-30 users, bandwidth is shared by all users
    - Strategically parked to reach as many units

Opportunities, and City of Austin Role

- The Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission could develop a Recommendation to City Council to further explore the short-term and long-term opportunities presented today.
- *A reminder, GAATN has an active Board of Directors who are responsible for setting policies and making financial decisions for the network.
  - The Board has a Technical Subcommittee to plan, review, and make technical recommendations to the Board.
  - The City of Austin serves as the network management provider for GAATN through a service level agreement.
  - Austin ISD serves as the fiscal agent for GAATN.
  - https://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=292944#:~:text=GAATN%20was%20conceived%20in%20the,over%20the%20next%2010%20years.