

April 12, 2005

TO: John Szerlag, City Manager

FROM: John M. Lamerato, Assistant City Manager / Finance and Administration  
Brian P. Murphy, Assistant City Manager / Services  
Doug Smith, Director Real Estate and Development  
Gert Paraskevin, Information Technology Director

RE: Agenda Item – Wireless Oakland Pilot Community

### **RECOMMENDATION**

City administration requests approval and authorization to submit a request to Oakland County to become a pilot community for their high-speed wireless Internet initiative: Wireless Oakland. As part of this request, the City would provide access to City owned infrastructure to facilitate building the wireless network in Troy. Oakland County maintains that every community inside its boundaries will eventually have an opportunity to participate in this program. However, the advantages of being a pilot community include the opportunity to provide input into the implementation of this program for our city as well as county wide, an opportunity to test the system first hand and ensure it works for our community, and in the process demonstrate the City's interest in and support of providing free wireless internet access to citizens and visitors to Troy.

### **BACKGROUND**

Oakland County held a Private Sector Summit on March 14, 2005 followed by a Public Sector Summit on March 16, 2005, to explain the Wireless Oakland Program. Attached is the PowerPoint presentation given to the Public Sector that outlines their plan goals, objectives and timeline. One of the key objectives is to provide some level of free high-speed Internet access to everyone in the entire county be it business, resident or visitor. To meet that end the County is offering private industry free access to all existing County owned infrastructure, such as buildings, tornado siren poles, communication towers, traffic signals and unused fiber optic cable. These companies would then affix the necessary hardware to this infrastructure to build a wireless network. In return the County would receive free Internet access and the companies would have an opportunity to implement a business model that includes charging fees for advertising or additional services on top of basic wireless access. The wireless network would be completely owned and operated by the private sector.

Oakland County is planning to release an RFP in April 2005 to solicit private vendors to come up with viable proposals. At the same time they are asking local government to provide a justification to become one of approximately 5 pilot communities. Along with the justification they are asking for a commitment from the chief elected officer(s), a detailed inventory of qualified assets, and facilitated access to those assets.

Support for Troy's participation in this initiative has already begun to surface as evidenced by two attachments: a letter from Walsh College and an article in the Troy Eccentric by County Commissioner Will Molnar.

### **SUMMARY**

The City of Troy is in a good position to be considered as a pilot community. We already have a good inventory of qualified assets in our GIS system. We also have a good mix of residential, commercial, industrial and educational entities, along with the Automation Alley SmartZone. Participating as a pilot community would demonstrate to the people that live in, work in and visit our community, that Troy is in fact a progressive city.

# **Wireless Oakland:**

*Building the community and workforce of tomorrow...*

Public Sector Summit  
March 16, 2005

*Oakland County*

# Opening Remarks

L. Brooks Patterson, County Executive

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# **Wireless Oakland: Project Goals & Benefits**

Phil Bertolini, Chief Information Officer

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# Project Goals

- To blanket Oakland County with **wireless internet service**-portion of service **free**
- To break down the **digital divide** by offering “no-cost” or “low-cost” PCs, wireless technology, and training to underserved populations within Oakland County
- To **enhance** the commercial and residential character of the County by **embracing technology** in county and local planning practices

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# Project Benefits

- Enhance Oakland County's ability to **attract** and **retain** high-tech and nanotechnology **businesses**
- Enhance Oakland County's **residential character**
- Support a **growing mobile workforce** in public and private sectors

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# Project Benefits

- Elevate the **technical knowledge** of Oakland County's workforce
- Support the County's continued provision of **eGovernment services** and allow elected officials to "push" digital information to larger constituent groups

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# Call to Action

- Partners are a key component of this initiative:
  - **Local government**
  - Private industry
  - **Educational community**
  - Automation Alley
  - GLIMA
  - Michigan Broadband Authority
  - Legislature

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# Intent of Meeting

- Clearly articulate the County's vision
- Open a dialog with future partners
- Clearly articulate pilot community criteria
- NOT to solve technical problems

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# **Wireless Internet Service: Project Overview**

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# Project Overview

- Oakland County will not own or operate wireless network
- Will leverage public assets (infrastructure) already funded by county taxpayers
- Will provide incentive for private sector implementation and partner with technology provider(s) to offer service

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# Wireless Technologies



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# Project Boundaries

- County-wide, seamless coverage must be provided
- Free wireless internet service must be provided
- Higher-speed service and other “for fee” services can be offered
- Consumer based technology must be supported
- Access provided via standard “splash screen” that allows private partner(s) to sell advertising and/or “fee services”

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# Project Governance

- Advisory committee will be formed
  - Public and private sector participants
- Key governance issues:
  - Quality of service
  - Technology integration
  - Wireless Oakland “splash-screen” content
- Partnership agreements will be required

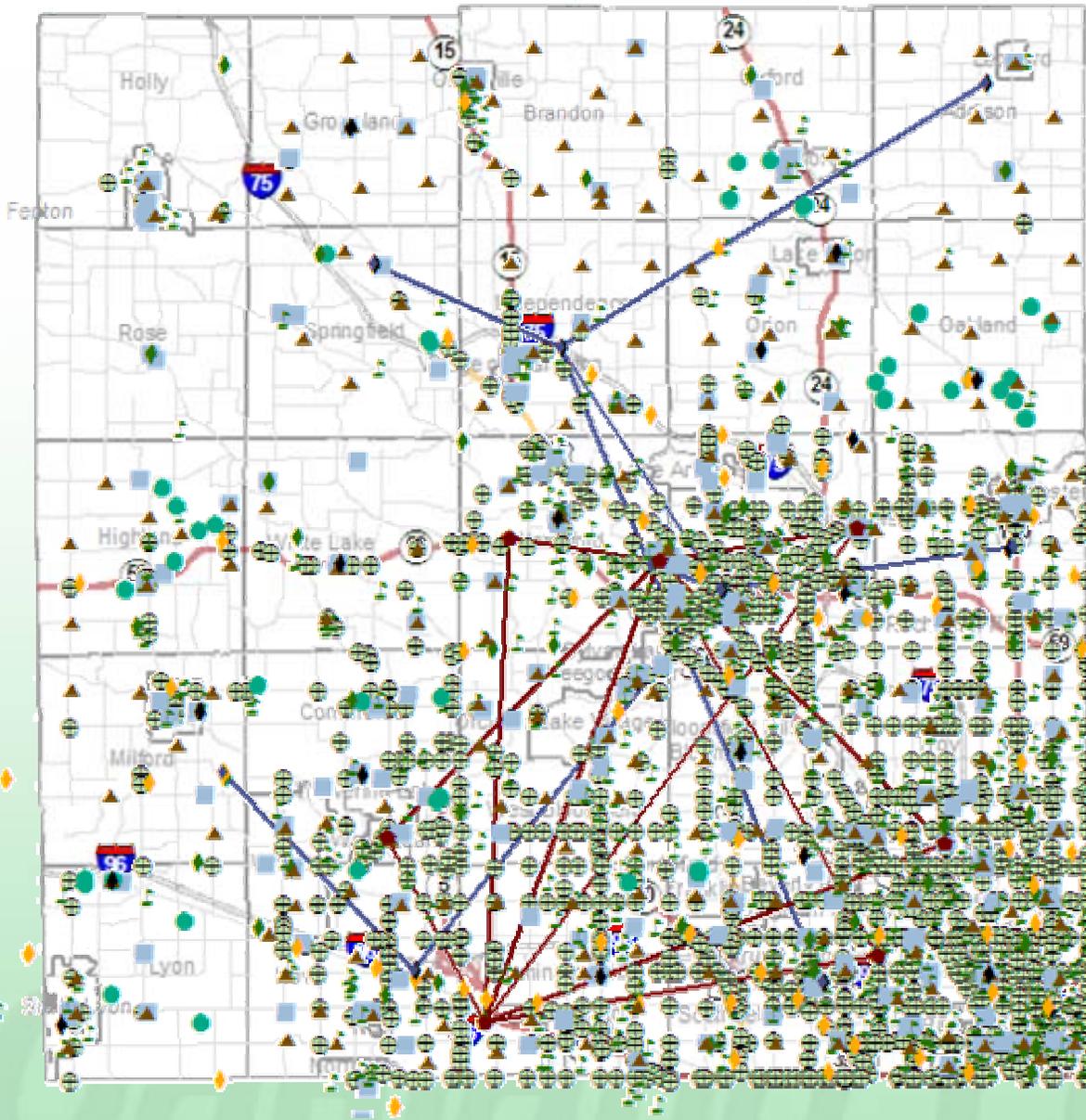
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# Public Assets

- Existing Private Sector Partnerships
  - Private Tower Companies
  - Automation Alley
- Physical Infrastructure
- Existing Public Sector Partnerships
  - CVTs, RCOC, OCDC, MBDA

## Assets

- Dark fiber network
- Line of sight network
- 23 Government owned towers
- 120 Privately managed towers
- 200 Tornado siren poles
- 350 Public schools
- 325 Buildings & structures
- 1400 Traffic signals



# Public Assets - Summary

- Approximately 2400 inventoried to date
  - Worth hundreds of millions of dollars
- Additional assets will be pledged by future partners

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# Private Partner Criteria

- Creative Solutions
  - Technology and Business Model
- Implementation Methodology
  - Technical Approach and Feasibility
  - Build-out Schedule
- Countywide Service Approach

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# Private Partner Criteria

- Business Model
  - Public or “Free” Services
  - User Fees and Services
  - Sustainability Plans
- Experience and Corporate Viability

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# Schedule of Events

- Gather partner feedback in March 2005
- Release RFP in April 2005
- Partner(s) selected in Summer of 2005
- Demonstration project in September 2005
- Pilot projects in Fall of 2005
- Full implementation in 2005 and 2006

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# Pilot Communities

- Soliciting requests in April of 2005
- What are we expecting?
  - Justification for selection
  - Commitment of Chief Elected Officer
  - Detailed inventory of “qualified assets”
  - Facilitated access to “qualified assets”
- Requests directed to Phil Bertolini
- Pilot selection made at conclusion of RFP review

# Closing Comments

- How can you help?
  - Educate your community
  - Inventory “qualified assets”
  - Volunteer to be a pilot
  - Be ready to assist with full implementation

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# Question/Answer



*For more information on Wireless Oakland, visit us  
on the web: [www.co.oakland.mi.us/wireless](http://www.co.oakland.mi.us/wireless)*

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March 18, 2005

Mr. John Szerlag  
City Manager  
City of Troy  
500 W. Big Beaver Rd.  
Troy, MI 48084

Dear Mr. Szerlag:

Walsh College recently sent representatives to the Wireless Oakland Public Sector Summit headed by L. Brooks Patterson. The wireless initiative was first brought to the public in Patterson's State of the County address in February 2005. Since then, it has begun to take on steam and has generated a good deal of excitement in the community at large.

In the event that the City of Troy was not represented at the summit on March 16, 2005, allow us to share the three main goals of this exciting project:

- To blanket all 910 square miles of Oakland County with wireless Internet service.
- To break down the digital divide by offering "no-cost" or "low-cost" PCs, wireless technology, and training to underserved populations within Oakland County.
- To enhance the commercial and residential character of the County by embracing technology in county and local planning practices.

Oakland County will meet these goals through partnerships with the private and public sectors. The County does not plan to own or operate the wireless network; that task will fall to the multiple private vendors who provide the best proposals. The public sector, mostly municipalities, will be responsible for actively participating in the Wireless Oakland project and providing access to assets that qualify for inclusion as a wireless access point. The County expects the public sector to incur no charge for their participation, barring any costs that may be incurred by providing access to chosen assets. Educational institutions also fall under the public sector and will be asked to assist with community education, training, and the hosting of informational events.

Needless to say, Walsh College sees ample opportunities for our involvement in this project. The community education, training, and involvement benefits that Walsh College could bring as a pilot site would be immeasurable. The City of Troy also stands to benefit a great deal from this program, and could greatly serve its residents by becoming a pilot site. One of the largest benefits that the County is hoping to gain through this project is the attraction and retention of high-tech and nanotechnology

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March 18, 2005

Page 2 of 2

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businesses. Clearly, Troy is in a position to offer those companies many benefits that our neighboring municipalities might not be able to.

Phil Bertolini, Oakland County Chief Information Officer, is accepting letters from each town or village detailing the reasons that they should be included in the initial launch of this exciting endeavor. Oakland County has an opportunity to succeed in creating a fully wireless, Internet enabled community where others have failed. The chance for success depends largely on the public sector and Troy is in a position to assist in this endeavor as well as gain an immense benefit.

Our representatives would be pleased to share any other information gained from this summit with you, or you may go directly to the County at <http://www.co.oakland.mi.us/wireless/>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "K" and a cursive "A. Pretty".

Keith A. Pretty, J.D.  
President

**This story first appeared in:**

Troy Eccentric

Sunday, March 27, 2005

Columns

[Back](#)**Troy should pursue selection as Wireless Oakland pilot city**

By Will Molnar

When I was elected last November, I made a pledge to promote local economic development. Just over a week ago, at the Oakland County commissioners' auditorium in Pontiac, County Executive L. Brooks Patterson rolled out an ambitious new program which promises to do just that. The goal of Wireless Oakland is to blanket the county's 910 square miles with wireless Internet service and provide free high speed Internet access to every resident, business and visitor in the county by the end of 2006.

A veritable "technological cloud" would cover the county. With the right kind of modem (for example, a Blackberry), anyone could access the world-wide Web without having to be connected to a telephone line or cable. "I'm convinced the time is right for the county to go wireless," said Patterson. I'll second that.

Although some cities have already gone wireless, Oakland County is seeking to become the first county in the nation to go wireless. The county plans to partner with the private sector and cities using our existing physical infrastructure. (The county's stated goal is to provide this service at no additional cost to the county. Businesses would be responsible for installing and operating the network.) With an estimated 2,400 towers, government offices, public schools, traffic signals and some 500 miles of fiber-optic lines, the county is providing a very good platform on which private companies can build.

Among the anticipated benefits of Wireless Oakland are a more attractive business climate and greater productivity, the rapid expansion of the county's growing mobile workforce, and better free Internet access for the county's seniors and low income residents. In exchange for use of public assets without charge, private companies are expected to offer a basic level of free service anywhere in the county. Under the county proposal, businesses would be able to sell advertising and charge fees for a faster connection.

Having an educated workforce able to use the latest in technology is central to the county's economic development aims. "The goal is to create the workforce of tomorrow," said Oakland County's Chief Information

Officer Phil Bertolini. "If they never had access to the technology to begin with, how are they going to take advantage of those jobs?"

The county is soliciting proposals from cities who wish to serve as the pilot project(s). In my opinion, Troy would be an excellent place within which to get the project off the ground. I've spoken to City of Troy officials, and they already are working with the county on submission of a proposal.

If Oakland County is the economic engine of the State of Michigan, then Troy, with our thriving business community, is certainly the economic driving force in the county. A casual inventory of our assets, I think, would show that we already have most of the physical assets and communications infrastructure in place to go wireless.

Troy is home to Automation Alley, the consortium of high-technology companies clustered along the I-75 freeway, and the Big Beaver business corridor. Our schools and nearby institutions of higher learning are among the finest to be found anywhere, and the average educational attainment of our residents is among the highest in the county. Competing cities will find that's a tough combination to beat.

The future belongs to those who are prepared to meet it head on. We aren't called the City of Tomorrow ; Today, for nothing. Troy is deserving of selection as one of the Wireless Oakland pilot cities and here's hoping it happens. The item will need to be moved forward first by Troy's City Council.

As we celebrate our 50th birthday this year it would make a nice statement that, while Troy has grown by leaps and bounds, its best days are yet to come.

Will Molnar is an Oakland County Commissioner, representing District 13, which includes part of Troy.