

City of Grand Rapids - Wireless Broadband Project

The City's primary goal for this project is to enhance public safety by dramatically increasing the information available to mobile police officers and firefighters. Clearwire service will accommodate the City's public safety requirements, including real-time video streaming and photo transfer for police and fire vehicles traveling at up to 70 miles per hour. Service will not only be available for Police, Fire, and emergency medical service providers; but also to municipal field workers, and to the City's businesses, citizens, and visitors. Additional anticipated benefits of the high speed broadband WiMAX network include the expectation that a citywide network will:

- Improve service delivery to residents and reduce the cost of government
- Provide an [economic development tool](#) to attract and retain business
- Reduce the digital divide with affordable high-speed broadband service
- Facilitate wireless technology use for citizens and visitors
- Create a seamless wireless infrastructure to attract and retain young professionals

This will all be accomplished without burden on our taxpayers.

Update - 11/6/09

Clearwire's progress has been prohibited due to litigation initiated by iPCS alleging that Sprint violated an agreement which precluded Sprint, Nextel, and Clearwire from operating a competing wireless service in its territory. On October 19, Sprint Nextel and iPCS, Inc. [announced an agreement](#) for Sprint Nextel to acquire iPCS. As part of the agreement, Sprint Nextel and iPCS will seek an immediate stay of all pending litigation between the parties with a final resolution to become effective upon closing of the acquisition. The deal is expected to close in late 2009 or early 2010.

We expect that this is very good news for Grand Rapids and the region. The Clearwire WiMAX regional high speed broadband network is nearly complete with just a few towers and antennae to install. This deal frees up Clearwire to begin selling high-speed, 4-G wireless Internet in the region. We expect that once the deal is closed, the company will return to Grand Rapids to promptly finish up the network.

Background and Additional Information

Clearwire is the company selected by the City to build, own, and operate the wireless network. Clearwire merged with Sprint Nextel in November 2008, taking in \$3.2 billion in cash from an investor group that includes Comcast, Intel, Time Warner Cable, Google and Bright House Networks. The merger has caused a delay in network deployment when iPCS Inc., an Illinois company that offers Sprint-branded services in West Michigan and other Midwest markets, filed a lawsuit challenging the new Clearwire's right to operate in Grand Rapids. The lawsuit, which was originally scheduled to go to trial in December 2008, was postponed several times further delaying our project.

WiMAX was selected as the technology to best meet the City's needs. It is more reliable, secure, and scalable over large regions and has capacity for higher speeds, with a better user experience than other available technology. Coverage maps for the area are not publicly available. However, coverage is expected to be region-wide, stretching well outside of the city limits including Battle Creek, Kalamazoo, and Detroit.

[Market rates](#) for Clearwire WiMax service in the area have not been announced. However, discounted service of \$9.95 per month will be provided to up to 5% of the City's qualifying low-income households who qualify. Clearwire has also agreed to provide free wifi hot zones throughout the City for visitors and occasional users.

Submit your contact information to the [City's Wireless Project Manager](#) to receive additional information as it becomes available.

MORE

- [Samsung announced the commercial availability of its Mondri WiMAX tablet](#)
- [Clearwire and Cisco Form Alliance](#)
- [Comcast to sell mobile WiMAX laptop cards](#)