TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL
ATTN: FINANCE COMMITTEE
FROM: CITY MANAGER DEPARTMENT: ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
DATE: AUGUST 3, 2004 CMR: 374:04
SUBJECT: UPDATE ON INTERNET BROADCASTING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

This is an informational report and no Council action is required.

BACKGROUND
In 2002, Council asked staff to review the potential for broadcasting Council meetings over the Internet and report back with an analysis. Council had received communications from the community expressing an interest in the City exploring Internet broadcasting as an alternate way of providing live coverage of Council meetings.

City Council meetings are currently broadcast live on the cable system on government Channel 26. The live broadcasts are available to all cable subscribers in the cable joint powers agreement (JPA) service area, which includes Atherton, East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Palo Alto and portions of San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. City Council meetings are also re-broadcast on Channel 26 as well as on the second government channel, Channel 29. Broadcast services are provided through a contract with the Media Center (formerly the Midpeninsula Community Media Center) the community access organization for the JPA service area.

In 2003, staff reported back to Council (CMR:131:03; Attachment A) on the results of a cost analysis along with a recommendation not to proceed due to budget constraints. Council voted to delay procurement and implementation of an Internet broadcasting solution pending funding availability.

DISCUSSION
In December 2003, the Media Center was awarded grant funding from Cable Co-op through the Cable Co-op’s legacy funds grant program. The Media Center received the funding for an Internet broadcasting project. The Media Center intends to offer a service to the cities within the JPA to broadcast their city council meetings over the Internet.
The Media Center and the City have agreed to partner on the initial phase of the project, a pilot project to broadcast City of Palo Alto Council meetings. As part of the pilot project the City will provide temporary space for installation of the Media Center’s Internet broadcasting equipment. The pilot project will be provided at no cost to the City.

The pilot project is expected to launch in the fall season. The project will give viewers the opportunity to view live broadcasts of City Council meetings. Future enhancements may include archiving of meetings and a feature to search meetings by keyword.

The pilot project is expected to last at least six months, at which time it will be evaluated for continuation.

**RESOURCE IMPACT**
The Internet broadcasting pilot project headed by the Media Center will be at no cost to the City. Continuation or expansion of the project after the pilot phase may require funding support by interested JPA cities.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**
Approval of the agreements is consistent with existing City policies.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**
This is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act.

**ATTACHMENTS**
Attachment A: CMR: 131:03

PREPARED BY: ________________________________
DAVID RAMBERG
IT Manager, External Services

DEPARTMENT APPROVAL: ________________________________
CARL YEATS
Director, Administrative Services

CITY MANAGER APPROVAL: ________________________________
EMILY HARRISON
Assistant City Manager