

MGSA Wireless Broadband RFI Q & A
From 5/10/07 Pre-Proposal Conference

1. **Q:** *Do you expect there will be a separate RFP or will the RFI be the final document?*

A: We will make this determination after reviewing responses to the RFI. At this point, most likely this process will proceed to issuance of an RFP.

2. **Q:** *Are there GPS coordinates for the streetlights and other vertical assets shown on the GIS map?*

A: The streetlight locations were plotted based on street addresses and intersections. A more detailed analysis would have to be made in order to plot them by longitude and latitude.

3. **Q:** *What Public fiber assets would be available for utilization?*

A: As far as we are aware, the MGSA member jurisdictions do not have significant fiber assets available for use in this project. Most of what the County utilizes are leased fibers.

4. **Q:** *What is the current broadband penetration in Marin?*

A: The broadband penetration as determined through the Needs Assessment is 76% of residents *with computers* (or 70% penetration of *all households*).

It is important to note that Marin residents are willing to pay for portability and mobility. 0% of study respondents said they were unwilling to pay for wireless broadband.

5. **Q:** *What sort of discussions have been held with PG&E?*

A: No discussions significant to this project have been held with PG&E to this point. PG&E has a tariff rate established based on decisions made by the CPUC concerning the Metricom devices. This information can be found on the CPUC web site at: <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov> .

6. **Q:** *The white area shown on the GIS map indicates a population density covered by vertical assets including streetlights. What is this area as far as square mileage, and the population that it covers?*

A: The area represents 5% of the total square mileage, but approximately 62% of the household and population density. It is referenced to streetlight assets and other vertical assets with a 300 foot buffer zone (in other words, providing service within a radius of 300 feet from these locations).

7. **Q:** *Is it possible to accelerate the capability of the GIS Web link?*

A: The Web link is providing an image after gathering the data requested, so this creates a time lag.

8. **Q:** *Where is wireless broadband currently provided in Marin?*

A: The Needs Assessment indicates that there are a variety of wireless providers of hot spots and specific implementations for commercial businesses (wireless ISPs, national providers at coffee shops, etc.). As far as we are aware, there is no ubiquitous wireless broadband service in Marin.

9. **Q:** *Does the County currently provide or access wireless services?*

A: The County has a traditional UHF (approximately 480 to 490 MHz) public safety dispatch system operated by MERA (<http://www.meraonline.org>). The County also uses the services of broadband over cellular providers (such as Verizon, AT&T/Cingular).

10. **Q:** *Is the County planning to acquire any licensed spectrum for the network?*

A: The County has been approved for public safety operation in the 4.9 GHz band, but it has not yet utilized the spectrum. The County is open to other licensed spectrum possibilities but has no other plans as of today.

The MGSA does not desire to operate a municipal broadband system at this point.

Public safety entities in Marin are looking at the potential for developing a 700MHz system in the future.

11. **Q:** *Does the current public safety radio system provide data capabilities?*

A: The system provides certain hot-button type capabilities and rip and read data.

12. **Q:** *Is the RFI available in a Word version?*

A: Yes, and it is now posted on the MGSA's Website at www.maringsa.org.

13. **Q:** *Who provides the County's current telecommunications services?*
- A:** Most services are provided by AT&T. Public safety mobile data terminal users use Sprint and Verizon's EVDO system as well as AT&T/Cingular's EDGE system.
14. **Q:** *Are the County and the participating jurisdictions interested in an anchor/tenant arrangement? Has there been any discussion in this regard? Has any amount been budgeted?*
- A:** This has been discussed. The County and its incorporated municipalities and their agencies would be willing to entertain an anchor/tenant arrangement, depending upon the cost and the services provided. The County realizes that achieving the level of services needed may require anchor tenancy as well as other types of partnerships. No budget has been determined for this yet. However, it has been expressed that if higher levels of service could be gained from what's currently being spent (\$50 to \$75 per month per user on mobile broadband services, for instance), then it's quite likely that this transference of cost would be acceptable. Grant funds may be available as well.
15. **Q:** *What are the County and its incorporated municipalities' other telecommunications costs?*
- A:** These are budgeted items and so are available publicly. We will endeavor to gather as much cost information as feasible and post it, or links to it, on the Website.
16. **Q:** *If there are a variety of entities interested in providing vertical assets, would there need to be separate negotiations and agreements with each one of these entities?*
- A:** For all MGSA controlled assets, only one agreement would be required. The MGSA would work with other asset owners and providers and take the lead on developing necessary agreements. It is likely that a universal template could be developed that would apply in many cases.
17. **Q:** *For the existing public safety wireless network, is it a Land Mobile Radio System?*
- A.** MERA is a Land Mobile Radio System used primarily for voice communications.

18. Q: *Who owns MERA's tower facilities, and are they available for use in this project?*

A: MERA would like to make them available; however, it will depend upon the ability to make them available under the current lease or to amend the lease. Some leases are narrow concerning the tower's allowable use. MERA owns all of its towers. Some are on government property; however, seven are on private property. The MGSA would work with MERA to attempt to amend leases as necessary to utilize the towers for this project.

19. Q: *Is more information available about MERA?*

A: There is information about MERA in the Needs Assessment Report. Also, more information can be found about MERA at www.meraonline.org. Additionally, we will endeavor to place additional pictures of the towers on the Marin GSA Website.

20. Q: *Is there value for mobility reasons to cover outside the white area as shown on the GIS map?*

A: Yes. Public safety entities need coverage outside the white area including West Marin.

21. Q: *Is there funding available to utilize the 4.9 GHz spectrum? Would 4.9 GHz be available for commercial purposes?*

A: There is the potential for obtaining grants but none are in place today. 4.9 GHz is reserved for life, safety and health protection services.

22. Q: *What is of most concern to first responders?*

A: Priority access to the system as needed. Public Safety is used to owning and operating their own systems and thus controlling and obtaining immediate access. For example, if network backhaul is shared, first responders must have priority provision of backhaul as needed.

Also system interoperability is a significant issue for public safety. If the system accessed is not ubiquitous, it must have a seamless interface to other systems used (such as between a Wi-Fi network and a broadband over cellular network).

23. Q: *Has the MGSA established service priorities in order that service providers could optimize their system concepts?*

A: While many applications were demonstrated as needed, on the institutional side, public safety and public works/transportation/utility applications are seen as the highest priority. On the residential and business side, portability and mobility for telecommuting and internet access, as well as increasing access to video would be the highest priority.

It is important to note that we are open to creative and innovative concepts to meet application and coverage needs, including phasing in portions of the system or integration of new technologies over time.

24. Q: *The RFI indicated that, depending on the information received, the MGSA may want to go forward with pilots or proofs of concept. Is there a budget for this?*

A: There is no set budget for pilots. There are some contingency funds that could be utilized depending on how much the pilots would cost.

25. Q: *What is the time frame for implementation of a pilot?*

A: No timeframe has yet been set. The timeframe will be determined after reviewing the responses to the RFI.

26. Q: *What would the MGSA find most beneficial in a pilot?*

A: The MGSA would like to test as many applications as feasible to demonstrate their viability for wider scale implementation. For example, pilots that demonstrate high capacity, portability, mobility and provision of video and graphic-intensive data would be the most useful, especially if they would employ technology that would not be quickly obsoleted (mobile Wi-Max and 802.11n Wi-Fi were mentioned as possible demonstration technologies). The RFI responses will ultimately help determine the strategy for going forward with a pilot.

27. Q: *Who are the vendors and service providers for educational entities?*

A: The College at Marin has not yet developed, but desires to develop, an on-campus wireless system. Dominican University has implemented such a system (we will check on who the service provider is and endeavor to post this information on the website). Several of the school districts have begun to develop wireless broadband systems. We'll check on who their service providers are as well and post this information on the website.

28. Q: *Can we get a copy of the MGSA JPA Agreement?*

A: We will endeavor to post the JPA on the Maringsa.org web site web site

29. **Q:** *Can the meeting attendees list be posted so that participants may contact other participants?*

A: Yes. That list is now posted on the Marin GSA Website. Known Pre-response Conference attendees by phone are also listed. Anyone else interested in being listed or that was missed is invited to send an e-mail to rfi@marin.org, and their names will be added to the list.

30. **Q:** *Was today's pre-response conference mandatory and does the lack of participation preclude others from responding to the RFI?*

A: No, the conference was not mandatory. No. Anyone regardless of participation in today's conference may respond.

31. **Q:** *Who are the Contacts for further information and questions?*

A: Michael Garvey, MGSA Executive Director, and Tom Robinson of CBG Communications are the contacts. Their contact information can be found at the end of the RFI.