

Dear Colleagues,

We would ask for your consideration on the following.

Many of our city owned recreational facilities already have internet connectivity onsite for staff use.

Public access to wifi is an increasingly important “quality of experience” factor for users of libraries, recreation centres, gyms, etc, for both regular users and visitors alike, and can also be a safety enhancement.

The City of London is at a disadvantage in attracting visiting teams to our arenas for area hockey tournaments because other communities already offer public WiFi access (St. Catherines, Hamilton, etc). Councillor Lewis has been involved in minor hockey with the Bandits Association for 5 years, and has seen entire divisions cancelled because we could not attract enough teams. While there are multiple reasons for this, sadly in part it is that London has a reputation for having poor arena facilities/amenities.

Likewise, the Canada Games Aquatic Centre is at a disadvantage in bidding for swimming and diving events because it does not offer WiFi.

If we want to attract high profile events, it is also a necessity to have connectivity available for visiting media, as well as attracting visiting athletes and teams. It is also an issue of concern for local families.

It is not unusual for 12-13yr olds to work as timekeepers for games at our rinks. These youth often have smart devices that do not have talk and text or data plans enabled for various reasons. The lack of WiFi is a barrier for them to stay in touch with home, to be able to message and say “I’m staying to do an extra game,” or “I’m going to a friend’s house after the game”.

Parents want to be able to send in game/event pictures of their young athletes to family members who may be at work or with a sibling at another location. A coach may want to enter the results immediately after the game/event. But in London at many venues they can only do so through their data plan.

Our libraries offer free WiFi. The new Bostwick Community Centre offers both library and YMCA WiFi connectivity. The Western Fair Sports Complex and Budweiser Gardens both offer this amenity, as does London City Hall itself. Yet older facilities like Argyle Arena, Canada Games Aquatic Centre or Nichols Arena do not.

Let’s fix this disparity between services at London’s public venues.

That the following motion be considered for addition to the draft the Strategic Plan 2019-2023:

*Civic Administration be directed to review opportunities, and bring forward associated targets in the 2019-2023 Strategic plan and an associated business case as part of the 2020 Multi-year Budget Process, to provide public Wi-Fi in recreation facilities where there is a business and/or customer need and appropriate network connectivity is available or can be reasonably achieved, for implementation beginning in 2020 and to target rollout completion by 2022.*

Respectfully,

Shawn Lewis  
Ward 2 Councillor

Josh Morgan  
Ward 7 Councillor

Elizabeth Pelosa  
Ward 12 Councillor