



**REPORT TO MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL**

AGENDA ITEM

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR  
AND CITY COUNCIL

DATE: December 4, 2007

SUBJECT: Community & Senior Center Internet Policy

**Report in Brief**

The Parks and Recreation Department has been working on the development of an Internet policy for the Community & Senior Center. A draft policy has been developed and reviewed by the Park & Recreation Commission and Commission on Aging during a joint meeting last August. The Commissions recommended a use policy that allows for restricted social networking. A City Council Subcommittee consisting of Mayor Flory and Vice Mayor Davies recommended a policy that does not allow social networking. In order to resolve this matter and implement an Internet policy for the Community & Senior Center, staff has summarized the issue for presentation to the City Council.

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the Internet policy recommended by the Council Subcommittee which does not allow social networking described as Alternative No. 2 herein.

**Background**

On July 9, 2007, Parks and Recreation Commissioners and City Council received a letter from a parent regarding youth center Internet use. A participant allegedly created an account on MySpace.com at the Youth Center and used it to contact a 17-year-old boy from San Jose, who subsequently drove to Woodland with his parents to visit.

Since this incident, most Internet sites on the Youth Center computers have been blocked until further notice, and there has been a request from the Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council to implement an Internet policy that would appropriately fit the Community and Senior Center. A team was put together to discuss the formation of the policy, which included:

- Dan Rice (Recreation Superintendent)
- Hector Lopez (Recreation Supervisor)
- Yvette Smith (Recreation Supervisor)
- Dallas Tringali (Recreation Coordinator)
- Susannah Reinhart (Senior Center Program Manager)
- Hays Fisher (Senior Center Computer Club President)
- Dallas Hyde (Woodland Police Detective)

This group was comprised of these members because each is directly affected by the policy. Detective Dallas Hyde was recruited to give a law enforcement perspective. The group discussed opinions and liability and came up with a policy that could realistically work for the Community and Senior Center.

Prior to the team meeting, research was completed by staff, including a survey of other teen centers that have Internet access, as well as reading two books on Internet safety and communicating with Nancy E. Willard, MS, author of "Cyber-Safe Kids, Cyber-Savvy Teens."

The policy drafted by staff would allow for users 13 and under to visit appropriate websites on the Internet. This would include research sites, recreational sites (game, network TV, etc.), and free email (considered "Level 1" access). For users 14 and older, in addition to Level 1, access will also be allowed to use social networking websites such as MySpace.com (considered "Level 2" access). The age criterion was selected because MySpace.com's rules allow users to be 14-years-old and older.

Staff's draft policy was presented to the Parks & Recreation Commission and the Commission on Aging at a joint meeting on August 27, 2007. The two Commissions unanimously recommended the policy (Alternative #1) be forwarded to the City Council for approval.

Prior to the City Council's review, an Ad-Hoc Council Subcommittee composed of the Mayor and Vice Mayor reviewed the draft policy. The Council Subcommittee disagreed with the concept of allowing social networking at the Center. Comments from the Subcommittee stressed that the City Council understood that the computers were intended to be used primarily for homework and research. The Subcommittee was also concerned that allowing social networking will promote lethargy and non-activity. Finally, the Subcommittee stated that social networking should be done at home under the supervision of parents or guardians.

Those affected by the policy are: Youth Center participants, Senior Center Computer Club participants, and community members who wish to use the wireless Internet service at the Center. When access was taken away, many Youth Center participants wrote emails, letters, and dropped notes in our suggestion box asking for MySpace access. A parent of a Youth Center teen also spoke at the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting in favor of giving MySpace access back to youth center participants. Senior citizen participants have not expressed concern regarding access to MySpace.

### **Discussion**

The new Internet Policy at the Woodland Community & Senior Center will be the guiding document for Internet usage at the Center. Council's approval will place appropriate restrictions on use of Internet service provided at the Community & Senior Center. Additionally, Youth Center participants will be provided the opportunity to learn about responsible Internet use. The policy recommended by the Council's Subcommittee (Alternative 2) will place further appropriate restrictions on Internet users.

The primary potential benefits associated with Alternative No. 1 include increased enrollment at the Youth Center because of youth interest in social networking, , ability to utilize social networking for marketing purposes, ability for participants to contact many friends simultaneously and the opportunity to learn responsible Internet use. The primary potential risks include the minor's ability to contact adults, exposure to inappropriate items, cyberbullying, and exposure to malicious software. These risks can be mitigated with the EtherShield filtering and monitoring apparatus already in place. The system works by filtering out any websites that are categorically deemed inappropriate, and staff also has the ability to add or subtract specific sites from that list, including pages within the main sites.

The primary potential benefits associated with Alternative No. 2 include the benefits described above and avoidance of the specific risks associated with social networking. In addition, the Subcommittee believes that Alternative No. 2 establishes a use policy that is consistent with the City Council's vision for the primary use of the Youth Center computers as tools for students to complete homework and academic research. Allowing use such as social networking detracts from the primary use and exposes the City to liability and young people to risks should inappropriate contacts occur between adults and youth as young as 14 years old.

It is important for the City Council to note that there are no public laws, rules or regulations governing Internet use at community centers or similar programs. The decision associated with the degree of restricted Internet access is a matter of policy that is ultimately up to the City Council. The challenge associated with this decision is reflected by the lack of agreement between the Park and Recreation and Senior Commissions and the Council Subcommittee.

### **Fiscal Impact**

Either alternative will have no impact on the General Fund.

### **Public Contact**

Posting of the City Council agenda. Copies of this report have been provided to the Parks and Recreation Commission and Senior Commission.

### **Commission Recommendation**

A joint meeting of the Parks & Recreation Commission and the Commission on Aging was held to review the issue of the Internet service usage at the Community & Senior Center. Both Commissions recommended the Alternative No. 1 Internet policy that allows for restricted social networking.

**Council Committee Recommendation**

The Council Subcommittee requested Parks & Recreation staff develop an alternative policy to review that did not include social networking. This policy is included as Alternative No. 2

**Alternative Courses of Action**

1. Approve the Internet policy recommended by the Parks and Recreation Commission which allows restricted social networking described herein as Alternative No. 1.
2. Approve the Internet policy recommended by the Council Subcommittee which does not allow social networking described as Alternative No. 2 herein.

**Recommendation for Action**

Staff recommends that the City Council approve Alternative No. 2.

Prepared by: Dallas Tringali  
Recreation Coordinator

Reviewed by: Dan Rice  
Recreation Superintendent

Reviewed by: Daniel W. Gentry, Director  
Parks & Recreation

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Mark G. Deven  
City Manager

Enclosed:  
Commission Recommended Internet Policy  
Council Subcommittee Recommended Internet Policy

**Woodland Community & Senior Center**  
**Internet Use Policy**

**(Alternative No. 1 Recommended by Parks and Recreation Commission and Commission on Aging)**

The Woodland Community & Senior Center offers computer and Internet use to many of its patrons for recreational and educational purposes. A great majority of inappropriate websites (pornography, hatred, weapons, loopholes, etc.) will be blocked through the Center's Internet filter. Internet users are separated into three separate groups:

- 1) Youth Center users
- 2) Senior Center users
- 3) Open Network users

These groups will be applied to two separate policy levels:

**Level 1 Access**

This policy will be applied to Open Network users and users 13-years-old and under in the Youth Center (will be applied to the three computers facing the mural). The Level 1 users will be given access to the following site categories:

<b>Site Classification</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Benefit</b>
Educational/Research/Search	Wikipedia Dictionary.com Google Yahoo!	Will allow users to research information for business, projects, homework, etc.
News	Reuters CNN MSNBC NPR	Will allow users access to current events and world happenings.
Free Email	Yahoo! Mail GMail Hotmail AOL	Will allow users to communicate with others over a secure mail service.
Games/Entertainment	MiniClip.com Yahoo! Games Neopets.com Shockwave.com	Will allow users to utilize the recreational side of the Internet.
Network Television	Animal Planet Discovery Channel Disney Channel Nickelodeon	Will allow users to get information on TV shows, characters, games, etc.

**Level 2 Access**

This policy will be applied to Senior Center users and users 14-years-old and over in the Youth Center (will be applied to the three computers facing away from the mural). The Level 2 users, in addition to Level 1 access, will be given access to the following site category:

<b>Site Classification</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Benefit</b>
Social Networking	MySpace	Will allow users to communicate with other friends on MySpace, and will provide other recreational aspects.

**Youth Center User Stipulations**

In order for Youth Center users to utilize computers offered in the Youth Center, they must complete and adhere to the following stipulations:

- 1) Complete "Responsible Internet Use Training" with a parent/guardian.
- 2) Complete the Youth Center's "Computer Use Agreement" form.
- 3) If a Level 2 user, must designate MySpace profile as "private," which will be confirmed by staff.
- 4) If a Level 2 user, must add the Youth Center's MySpace account to the user's personal friends list.
- 5) If a Level 2 user, will comply with random profile checks while at the Youth Center.
- 6) If a Level 2 user, understands that the "groups," "forum," and "chat" functions will be disabled from MySpace.

**Woodland Community & Senior Center**  
**Internet Use Policy**  
**(Alternative No. 2 Recommended by Council Subcommittee)**

The Woodland Community & Senior Center offers computer and Internet use to many of its patrons for recreational and educational purposes. A great majority of inappropriate websites (pornography, hatred, weapons, loopholes, etc.) will be blocked through the Center's Internet filter. Internet users are separated into three separate groups:

- 1) Youth Center users
- 2) Senior Center users
- 3) Open Network users

These groups will be applied to two separate policy levels:

**Level 1 Access**

This policy will be applied to Open Network users and users 17-years-old and under in the Youth Center. The Level 1 users will be given access to the following site categories:

<b>Site Classification</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Benefit</b>
Educational/Research/Search	Wikipedia Dictionary.com Google Yahoo!	Will allow users to research information for business, projects, homework, etc.
News	Reuters CNN MSNBC NPR	Will allow users access to current events and world happenings.
Games/Entertainment	MiniClip.com Yahoo! Games Neopets.com Shockwave.com	Will allow users to utilize the recreational side of the Internet.
Network Television	Animal Planet Discovery Channel Disney Channel Nickelodeon	Will allow users to get information on TV shows, characters, games, etc.

**Level 2 Access**

This policy will be applied to Senior Center users and users 18-years-old and over using the wireless Internet provided by the Community & Senior Center. The Level 2 users, in addition to Level 1 access, will be given access to the following site category:

<b>Site Classification</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Benefit</b>
Free Email	Yahoo! Mail GMail Hotmail AOL	Will allow users to communicate with others over a secure mail service.