

A New Initiative from the SWCA Board

Evaluating Technology Infrastructure Improvements For Our Community



Technology Infrastructure Program (TIP)—Newsletter #5 (3/17/17)

Progress To Date:

The five bids received (all bidders provided responsive submittals) are being reviewed and analyzed. It is anticipated that over the next 2-3 weeks, 2 or 3 companies will be selected to finalize their offering so that a decision on which one would provide the best “fit” can be made, negotiated and reviewed at the Town Hall meetings on April 17th.

More results from the TIP Resident Survey:

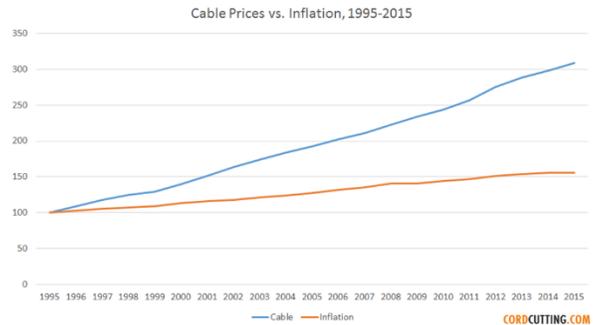
The Board and the Committee wish to **Thank You**, for the excellent response to the survey conducted a few weeks ago, and for your recent feedback to many Neighborhood Representatives following their questions about what issues/concerns you want considered during negotiations. This has been exceptionally valuable and will help us to incorporate as many aspects as we can in the final contract. **We also appreciate, based on your feedback, that you continue to withhold your final judgement until a final package has been presented.**

Some of the key issues identified by you which we are addressing:

- **The Installation Process:**
 - How companies will address the laying of the fiber within our community.
 - How they will perform the internal installation within each home.
 - What they will do to ensure a smooth transition in the operation of all your electronic equipment.
- **The need to minimize disruptions due to change as much as possible:**
 - We understand that there are concerns about changes driven by the transition of services.
 - The committee is striving to limit the number of changes that will be required.
 - Provisions are being made to provide extra help for those less technically experienced.
- **Reduce the cost impact due to a “Bulk Contract”:**
 - Installing a fiber infrastructure is a costly commitment for any company; while some residents may wish to limit the term of the contract, it is probable that this will need to be a 10-year contract which is standard for SWFL fiber installations. This will be balanced by important guarantees about system upgrades, customer service levels and system reliability.
 - Shadow Wood will gain a new digital distribution network to replace our currently aging, deteriorating and outdated infrastructure.
- **Flexibility and “Future-Proofing” of a new infrastructure:**
 - The bulk contract will provide for periodic technology upgrades.
 - Any future wireless technology (5G and others) is expected to require a robust fiber infrastructure located very close to the end user to facilitate its successful deployment.
 - The faster broadband speeds and greater reliability provided by fiber will be required for high quality video streaming, enhanced home automation and the ever-increasing number of wi-fi devices in use in the average home.

Are you frustrated by the continuing escalating costs from your service provider?

The current primary suppliers of TV and Internet services in Shadow Wood, as we indicated in an earlier Newsletter (2/3/17), are Comcast, Direct TV and Century Link with Comcast dominating across all services. Most customers appear satisfied with the level of customer service and reliability--clearly a marked improvement from years past. That said, there remains about 1 in 7 who continue to have issues with Comcast's customer service. However, a much higher percentage have an issue with the cost of both their TV and internet services (42% and 34% respectively have a "low opinion" on what they must pay). **On average, cable's increases have been more than four times that of inflation;** increasing by 5.8% annually for the past 20 years! The benefit of a bundled contract would be a negotiated predetermined annual escalation rate of 4% or less which would replace the historical increases seen in the retail environment.



What are the key features you want to see from an internet provider?

Regarding what important features an Internet company should provide, the survey results indicate that Availability/Reliability is the most important issue. Customer Service, Price and Internet Speed were all ranked roughly equal and slightly less important.

What were some of your other concerns?

1 in 5 (almost 200 people out of those who completed the survey) took the time to express an opinion about the technology infrastructure initiative. Some of the points expressed were:

- 23% said they were generally happy with their current provider,
- A similar number (21%) felt there was no need to make a change,
- On the other hand, many (19%) were anxious to see new technology put in place,
- Just over 10% did not seem to think fiber was the most suitable option,
- Just under 10% wished to see a vacation package in place.

The Board and committee members recognize the need to address the concerns that have been expressed. It is hoped that the recent Newsletter #4, which discussed the merits of fiber, will help to address those who did not feel fiber was the correct choice. That same newsletter explained the future risks regarding the performance of the existing copper coaxial cable. It has been in the ground, often with no protection to the wire, for over 20 years and is prone to continuing deterioration which will ultimately have a negative impact on future performance. These opinions, and others, are being considered when negotiating with potential internet service providers.

How many months do people reside in Shadow Wood?

Lastly, you might be interested in the proportion of residents who reside in Shadow Wood for varying lengths of time during the year. The data indicates that 1 in 10 residents remain in Shadow Wood for between 1 and 3 months of the year, while 55% now reside in our community for 7 or more months!

