



Capitol Region Council of Governments

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To: Chief Administrative Officials
From: Kathy Dube, Special Projects Coordinator
Date: May 18, 2004
Re: Cell Tower Survey Results

At the request of one of its members, CRCOG undertook a survey of Cell Tower Financial Arrangements to provide information to municipalities with plans to enter into contracts with communications providers or initiate cell tower construction on their own. The attached survey results contain information from 16 different respondents, both within and outside the CRCOG Region, and should provide a flavor for the kinds of comparison and service packages this market will bear and the range of provisional options to be considered when negotiating cell tower contracts.

Highlights of the 16 responses are as follows:

- Municipal CAOs or town planners oversee cell tower contracts in the majority of the municipalities. Police departments oversee four contracts and fire districts the remaining two.
- Wireless providers or third parties that constructed the towers own all but four of the cell towers. In Farmington's case, the town owns the existing tower but wireless carriers will own the two that are pending. In some cases, the towers will revert to town ownership if the wireless providers no longer want them.
- Most communications companies are responsible for maintenance of the cell towers.
- Unless the town owns the cell tower, municipal land is leased to the owner of the tower, but municipalities can benefit in ways beyond a monthly lease arrangement. For instance:
 - The Blue Hills Fire District in Bloomfield got a new antenna constructed to replace its rusting old one, and also got a \$950,000 payment from SBA to purchase the tower four years ago.
 - The Town of Newington got a new trunking radio system including 350 radios valued at \$600,000 to \$700,000 from Marcus Communications, which owns the cell tower on Newington municipal property.
 - Windsor received a building and on-site shelter for the town's communications equipment from AT&T, along with installation of cable and town antennas.

- In most contracts, the municipal entity gets “best placement” for its own communications and public safety equipment.
- Contracts usually have built-in renewal parameters. Some, but not all, have built-in escalators.

As always, should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Hedy Ayers at (860) 522-2217. Also, we encourage you to contact the survey respondents directly to flesh out specific contract terms.

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