

Subject: AED – BIDs Public Wi-Fi

**FY 2019 Proposed Budget
Budget Work Session Follow-up**

3/29/2018

The following information is provided in response to a request made by John Vihstadt at the work session on 3/19/2018, regarding the following question:

Crystal City BID has recently terminated their complimentary WIFI access in their district. It would be interesting to learn the differences that drive the on-going need for complimentary WIFI in the Rosslyn and Ballston BIDs.

AED has engaged both Rosslyn and Ballston BIDs to understand why they have either continued (Ballston) or never begun (Rosslyn) a public Wi-Fi program. The individual markets within BID geographies are unique and business decisions such as whether to provide a public Wi-Fi service will directly reflect the needs in those communities. Ballston cites various benefits to its program, such as promoting the area as part of a “Smart-City” initiative—which is consistent with its overall brand and strategy as an innovation center. Other benefits include facilitating digital literacy for underserved populations and marketing the public Wi-Fi program as an attractive amenity for the business community, guests and residents.

Rosslyn BID staff have explored implementing public Wi-Fi, but believe that based on the build-out schedule of major developments such as Central Place, launching a system may be premature while the landscape is in a state of such rapid change. Rosslyn will continue to monitor conditions and consider future potential for a similar system to that found in Ballston.