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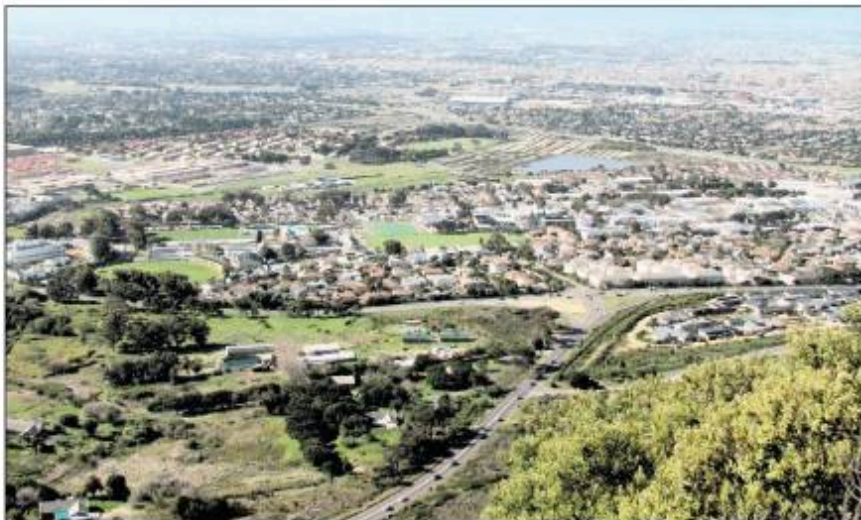
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Bold plan for valley

Residents' bodies in the Constantia Valley have joined forces with service providers to roll out improved broadband in the area.



Improved broadband could come to Constantia Valley.

KAREN WATKINS

The Constantia Property Owners' Association (CPOA) chairman Alec Pienaar has written to members informing them that they have joined forces with Constantia Valley Watches Association (CVWA) in a project to improve the broadband in the Constantia Valley.

"Bishopscourt have it...why don't we? They decided to skip the next generation and move straight to the latest generation technology ... Fibre to the Home (FTTH)," said Mr Pienaar in a message to residents.

The plan is to replace all the copper ADSL in the area with optical fibre. The cost is to be borne by the service provider.

Fibre optics is a technology that uses glass (or plastic) threads (fibres) to transmit data. A fibre optic cable consists of a bundle of glass threads, each of which is capable of transmitting messages modulated onto light waves.

"This will bring Constantia in line with great cities around the world that have already transitioned to fibre," said Mr Pienaar.

He said in Britain, good broadband is recognised as a contrib-

ing factor towards increasing the value of properties. "This is a welcome spin-off, however it's the improved broadband experience that most people will appreciate," said Mr Pienaar.

He said with the demand for data increasing at exponential rates, traditional ADSL will not cope in the future.

Fibre optics is the solution with high speed internet connectivity providing a high definition quality movie in five minutes as opposed to two hours with ADSL; and 100 songs via iTunes in three seconds as opposed to 19 minutes, with 300 hi-res photos being delivered in 13 seconds as opposed to 60 minutes.

"Most importantly it provides improved cellphone signal strength through the use of low radiation mini-masts using fibre optics. This means the need for the contentious high radiation large cellphone masts could be a thing of the past," said Mr Pienaar ("Protest against cell mast", Bulletin, December 4).

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97 percent of respondents in favour of technology



From page 1

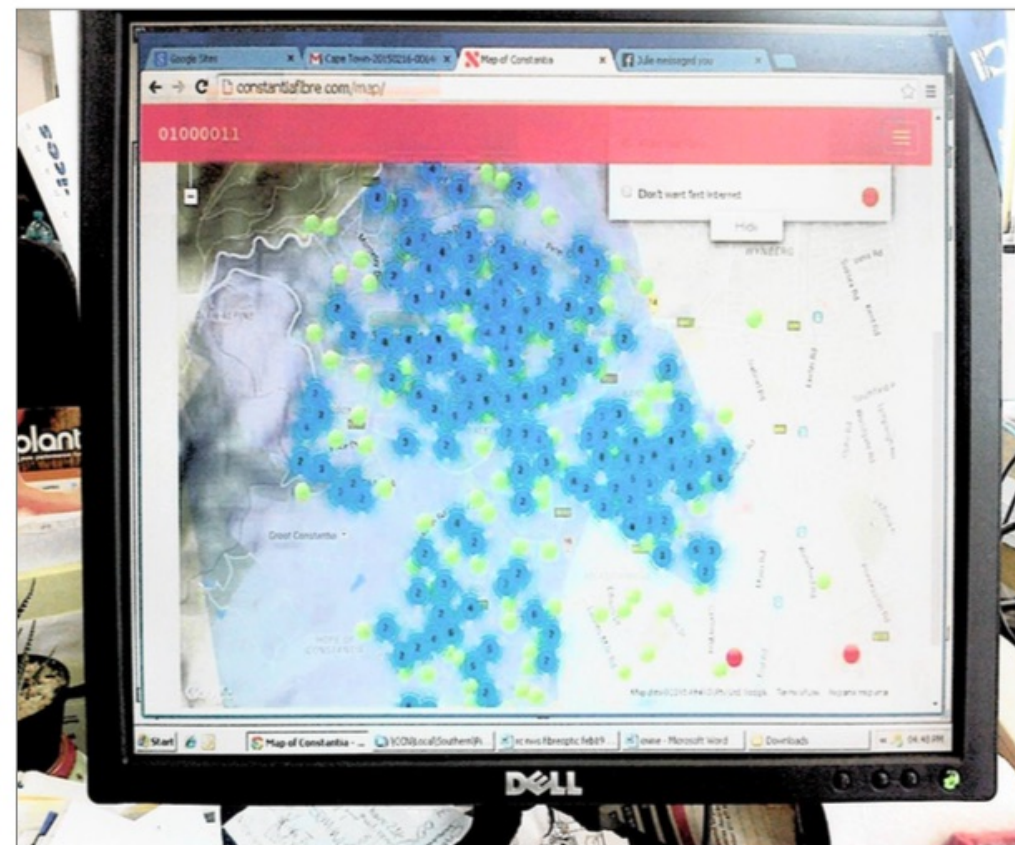
Another advantage is that the fibre optic network would greatly enhance the Valley Watch CCTV camera network.

“Service providers have already indicated their willingness to provide free camera connections,” he said. Another service is television through the internet (IPTV).

Matthew Quinton representing Electromagnetic Radiation South Africa (Ermsa) and Strawberry Lane Association (SSA) said they support FTTH as an alternative to wireless.

“Wireless is a dead-end and dangerous technology, while fibre solves many of our connectivity and security issues. It’s the only current global technology which can deliver the bandwidth required for future-proof data speeds. We won’t support using the FTTH to support a distributed antennae system (DAS) network as this will increase the proliferation of cellular and wireless radiation and the related health issues which it brings,” said Mr Quinton.

DAS is an approach to offering multiple wireless technologies within a facility. Some DAS vendors offer wi-fi as part of their solutions.



Mr Quinton added that many think the Strawberry Lane community are a bunch of hippies, on the lunatic fringe regarding their beliefs and demands around wireless and cellphone towers.

“This is true. That’s why we all live in the same area.”

Chairman of Constantia Watch Mike Voortman said they fully support the FTTH project. Regarding the possible cellphone distributed antennae proposed, he said: “We know that DAS is on CPOA’s agenda, so they will run with DAS related issues for our area. But it’s good that we know SSA’s position on this for their area when negotiations with suppliers start.”

A screen grab from the website showing green spots as people wanting Fibre to the Home, the red spots represent those who do not want it.

Executive committee member Martin Deissner said the CPOA need all Constantia residents to register their desire, or otherwise, to determine whether there is sufficient interest from a community to make it viable for service providers to construct the infrastructure. Mr Deissner has set up a website to provide information on FTTH and to conduct the survey.

He said when most of the responses have been received, the project team will be in a strong negotiating position to get the best deal from service providers.

He assures that none of the project team work for Telkom or any other service providers. They cannot guarantee results and are merely facilitating the process, he added.

He said earlier this month they conducted a survey through the CPOA membership databases.

“Of the 650 people who responded, 97% were in favour. However, the numbers are not sufficient to make it viable and we appeal to residents to spread the word so that we can reach the majority of the 3 500 homes in Constantia,” said Mr Deissner.

He said all residents need to do is register and complete a two-minute survey which is non-binding and no personal or contact details will be given to any service providers.

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