

Judge tosses lawsuit over NYC's payphone-turned-Wi-Fi plan

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A federal judge has dismissed a lawsuit challenging New York City's push to turn payphones into Wi-Fi hotspots.

Chief city lawyer Zachary Carter said Tuesday the ruling means the 7,500-hot spot project can proceed unimpeded. It's billed as the world's largest municipal Wi-Fi network, and some hot spots are already running.

Payphone company Telebeam Telecommunications Corp. is vowing to appeal. Telebeam operates about 1,300 payphones citywide.

Telebeam lawyer Robert Brill says the city created a monopoly by awarding the project to a single competitor, a consortium called CityBridge LLC.

The city said the agreement is legal and having a single operator will help ensure the Wi-Fi system runs smoothly.

CityBridge is paying to install it. The city stands to get digital advertising revenue.

CityBridge lawyers had no immediate comment.

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