IEEE P802.11  
Wireless LANs

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| Draft LS Response to WBA – QoS material | | | | |
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Abstract

Draft merger of content from 21/0953r0 (including modifications suggested in AANI SC Teleconference) into 865r5. Also refactors the content of 865r5 to focus scope on 802.11 PHY/MAC. (Redline is with respect to 865r5)

To: Wireless Broadband Alliance (WBA): 5G Work Group  
Jim Sturges, Chair, 5G Working Group ()

CC:

Subject: IEEE 802.11 Working Group Reply Liaison Statement to the WBA Liaison Statement on 5G & Wi-Fi RAN Convergence to IEEE 802.11

Date: 2021-07-xx

**Discussion:**

The IEEE 802.11 Working Group (WG) thanks the Wireless Broadband Alliance (WBA) for sharing their work on 5G and Wi-Fi RAN convergence and providing the resulting white paper “5G and Wi-Fi RAN Convergence – Aligning the Industry on Opportunities and Challenges” [1]. The IEEE 802.11 WG also thanks the WBA for providing and presenting an overview of the white paper at the January 2021 IEEE 802.11 Virtual meeting [2].

In addition, IEEE 802.11 WG thanks the WBA 5G working group for highlighting potential challenges and gaps in the following key areas:

1. 5G and Wi-Fi convergence architecture (for Trusted and Untrusted WLAN access);
2. ATSSS multi-access functionality;
3. End-to-end QoS;
4. Policy Interworking and enhancements across 5G and Wi-Fi;
5. Support for Wi-Fi only devices.

The IEEE 802.11 WG notes that the scope of IEEE Std. 802.11 is the definition of one Medium Access Control (MAC) and several physical layer (PHY) specifications for wireless connectivity for fixed, portable, and moving stations (STAs) within a local area [3, 4], whereas some of the potential challenges and gaps highlighted by WBA pertain to functionality above the MAC (e.g. higher layer policies, IP-based protocols, and core network architectures). Hence, the IEEE 802.11 WG in this reply will focus on features and capabilities that IEEE Std. 802.11 does define, and which are relevant to addressing these challenges and gaps – primarily in the domain of End-to-end QoS.

**Use of packet classification and DSCP marking for 802.11 QoS**

As noted by WBA, in deployment scenarios where (IP) data packets exchanged between a STA and a 3GPP 5G core network traverse an IEEE 802.11 air interface but do not have appropriate DSCP marking from which the required QoS treatment can be mapped at the transmitter, rule-based packet classification and QoS assignment can be performed instead. This approach may be necessary in scenarios where any DSCP marking applied to packets at source is removed or modified by intermediate nodes on the public Internet or by ISPs.

When the 3GPP network maps QoS flows to IPsec Child SAs, the SPI value of a Child SA can be used as the packet classifier for a QoS rule. The TCLAS element defined in IEEE Std. 802.11-2020 [3] supports classification based on IPsec SPI. Please refer to subclause 9.4.2.30, Frame classifier type 10 (IP extensions and higher layer parameters). With respect to Figure 9-327, the Protocol Number or Next Header field and Filter Value/Mask fields need to be set appropriately to specify the SPI field, depending on the use of ESP or AH protocol, (IPv4) UDP/TCP encapsulation and/or IPv6 extension headers. Multiple TCLAS elements (together with a TCLAS Processing element, see subclause 9.4.2.32) can be used to specify a classifier comprising both an SPI value and other parameters such as (outer) IP addresses and ports.

IEEE Std. 802.11-2020 defines several capabilities that make use of TCLAS elements for packet classification, notably the Stream Classification Service (SCS) (refer to subclause 11.25.2) and TS operations (refer to subclause 11.4). In both cases, the STA can request the AP to apply rules to downlink traffic that, on transmission, assign a specified User Priority (UP) to frames containing IP packets that match the TCLAS element(s) classifier. The STA might make such a request at the time the Child SAs are initiated and the corresponding SPI and UP values are known.

Alternatively, if the AP implements a northbound interface with the 5G core network (which is out of scope of IEEE Std. 802.11), equivalent classification rules can be directly configured on the AP without explicit signaling between the STA and AP.

For Child SAs carrying uplink traffic, the STA can assign the UP of the corresponding packets autonomously, so in general (e.g. except when Admission Control is required), it is assumed no specific exchanges with the AP are required.

In cases where the UP is assigned based on DSCP marking (instead of TCLAS classifier based rules), the mapping table might be configured on both APs and STAs by the network operator using the QoS Map capability (see subclause 11.22.9).

If there are deployment scenarios in which the relative priority QoS requirements of traffic flows cannot be represented either by DSCP marking or by TCLAS-based rules, IEEE 802.11 WG would appreciate additional information.

**Mapping 5G QoS to 802.11 QoS**

The 3GPP 5QI values are used to indicate QoS requirements in terms of relative priority, GBR/non-GBR, packet delay budget, packet error rate targets, and (in certain cases) a maximum data burst size.

The relative priority associated with 5QI values is directly comparable with the IEEE 802.11 UPs (which are mapped to EDCA access categories).

However, while the relative priority (e.g. UP) of an IP flow is likely to indirectly influence whether or not other parameters associated with a 5QI are met (e.g. packet delay budget), in practice an IEEE 802.11 based network might use various monitoring, queue management and air-interface scheduling techniques to help ensure the target KPIs for QoS flows in the network are met (see also below).

The TSPEC element (see subclause 9.4.2.29) can be used to explicitly exchange target KPIs between a STA and an AP for a QoS flow. The current design is primarily intended for use with Admission Control for GBR voice flows, however work is currently ongoing in the TGbe Task Group to enhance this signaling and its optimization for non-GBR flows and GBR flows for emerging applications.

**Meeting 5G QoS requirements over 802.11 PHY/MAC**

A wide range of WLAN implementations based on IEEE Std. 802.11 provide support for Voice, Video, and Data traffic applications, including Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and Video over IP applications. There is also widespread support for “Wi-Fi Offload” for 3GPP cellular data, as well as “Wi-Fi Calling” - a service that provides 3GPP voice and NAS services via a WLAN radio link.

As highlighted by WBA, there is an increasing range of applications (such as gaming, AR/VR and teleconferencing) that have stringent QoS requirements that must be met by the 802.11 PHY/MAC.

The UP assignment capabilities described above result in flows with different QoS requirements being separated into different queues (to help avoid head-of-line blocking), and provide differentiated channel access prioritization via EDCA access categories. This channel access prioritization is effective both within and between different IEEE Std. 802.11 based WLAN networks, and is also effective with respect to other technologies that share (unlicensed) spectrum using similar channel access rules.

In addition, as noted by WBA, IEEE Std. 802.11ax defines several new powerful features such as OFDMA, UL MU-MIMO, Spatial Reuse and TWT, which provide additional degrees of freedom for spectral resource allocation that can be leveraged by the scheduler in an IEEE Std. 802.11 based network to meet the KPIs of QoS traffic flows. For example, downlink OFDMA and MU-MIMO increase MAC efficiency and can reduce packet delay by transmitting packets to multiple users within the same TXOP, while Spatial Reuse can reduce packet delay by enabling additional transmit opportunities while managing interference. In addition, MU EDCA and trigger-based MU features allow uplink transmissions to be fully centrally controlled by the network. Certain KPIs such as packet error rate targets are also influenced by rate selection and retransmit behavior.

IEEE 802.11 WG notes that, as is typically the case in networking standards, a normative definition of a scheduler is out of scope of IEEE Std. 802.11. However, it is also noted that many IEEE Std. 802.11 based network implementations use a centralized WLAN controller that implements rich management interfaces between APs in the network and the controller for exchange of monitoring and centralized control signaling. Therefore, a centralized scheduler can leverage these PHY/MAC features to coordinate the optimal allocation of spectral resources and avoidance/mitigation of interference across the network, therefore ensuring the KPIs of QoS flows are met. In addition, policies defined at the scheduler can determine how QoS flows are treated when spectral resources are constrained (e.g. trade-off between overall network capacity and preserving the KPIs of GBR flows when link conditions degrade).

IEEE 802.11 WG agrees with WBA that analysis of these features – particularly in the form of real-world trials – is valuable to demonstrate the performance of IEEE Std. 802.11 based networks for fine grained QoS control.

In addition, as regulators around the world open up access to new unlicensed spectrum in the 6 GHz band, the emergence of IEEE Std. 802.11ax based implementations that support 6 GHz provides new opportunities to meet demanding QoS requirements for very high throughput and very low latency.

Finally, the IEEE 802.11 WG notes that IEEE Std. 802.11ax meets or exceeds requirements specified by the International Telecommunications Union for the 5G Indoor Hotspot and Dense Urban test environments of the enhanced Mobile Broadband (eMBB) usage scenario of IMT-2020, and therefore establishes a foundation for an advanced Wi-Fi technology capable of supporting 5G network performance. [5, 6]

{A polite conclusion should be added – affirming our willingness to work to make WLAN work for 5G}

Sincerely,

Dorothy Stanley

IEEE 802.11 Working Group Chair

**Dates of future IEEE 802.11 WG Meetings:**

TBS

**References:**

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1. <https://standards.ieee.org/news/2019/5g-indoor-hotspot-and-dense-urban-deployments.html> “IEEE P802.11ax™ Meets Requirements for 5G Indoor Hotspot and Dense Urban Deployments Enabling Enhanced Wireless Network Performance”, 17 December 2019

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