Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: City of Santa Monica

Project Title: Santa Monica City Net and City Wi-Fi

Project Type: Sustainable Adoption

_____Executive Summary_____

The opportunity to implement a model Public Computing Center Expansion and Sustainable Broadband Adoption project started with the City of Santa Monica's forward-thinking approach to information technology, land use, and economic development. In 1998, the City created a telecommunications master plan and decided to build a fiber optic network that would serve the city, college and schools. The original fiber optic backbone was constructed in 2002, and the network has expanded due to strong support by local businesses that agreed to fund the construction costs to lease dark fiber at their commercial buildings. As the network expands, additional businesses have benefited from the proximity to the backbone and are able to pay the construction costs for additional laterals to expand the network further. This self-sustaining model has worked well and has allowed the City to allocate the budget for the operational costs of the network.

The demand for advanced broadband speeds has risen drastically due to the growing need to transport content regionally and internationally at speeds that match global standards within the educational, high tech, film, healthcare, and information industries. This project will optimize the fiber optic network to provide lit transport to Internet Service Providers (ISPs) for businesses and organizations, and increase services and broadband training to existing Public Computing Centers in Santa Monica, California.

The City has developed and supports a local and wide area network with 140 servers that provide 355 software applications to 1,500 computer users via 1,350 computers and 400 printers. The City operates a comprehensive geographic information system, imaging systems, public safety systems, maintenance management systems, intelligent transportation systems; fleet management systems, internet and intranet services, fiber optic networks, Voice Over Internet Protocol telephony and many real-time IP based communications systems such as parking, traffic signal and security video applications.The City also provides technical training and support to the 1,500 computer users on technology topics such as the Microsoft Office suite, mobile communication technology.

The City's current management of the existing dark fiber optic network has already encouraged the demand for affordable broadband options by facilitating new connections with several Internet Service Providers located near the City's boundary and is generating $140,744 in new annual revenue. The revenue assists with sustaining the program's operational costs for connecting additional businesses and organizations.

The City already has educational and healthcare community anchor institutions connected to its fiber optic network. Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District, Santa Monica College, and UCLA Santa Monica Medical Center are community anchor institutions that could obtain primary or secondary connections to One Wilshire data center. The City's free Wi-Fi service utilizes the same fiber optic network and extends to 21 hot zones that serve diverse demographics. An example of a City Wi-Fi hot zone location is Virginia Ave Park, which is located within the Mid-City/Pico area, an area that contains the second largest share of the city's population. The share of children, 0-19 years of age, is the largest in the Mid-City/Pico area at 18.6%. Mid-City/Pico is the most diverse subarea and those identifying as Hispanics account for 28.1%, while Asian and Pacific Islanders and African-Americans each account for 8% of the subarea population. The Mid-City/Pico subarea has the lowest educational attainment in the city whereby 18.7% of the population age 25 and over do not have a High School diploma or equivalent and nearly 10% have less than 9 years of education.The percentage of families in poverty in this subarea is 34%.

Santa Monica's population count represents a density of 10,131 people per square mile, and when compared to the largest, urban, cities in California is behind only Santa Ana and San Francisco. Of a population of approximately 86,905, the project is estimated to reach 11,924 subscribers.

Since the economic downturn, the public demand has increased significantly for free City Wi-Fi and access at internet stations at the Public Computing Centers. The City has over 21 Wi-Fi hot zones and wishes to encourage individuals that own mobile computer equipment to utilize the Open Space areas to allow public without the resources to use the Public Computing Centers. Increasing the City Wi-Fi broadband speed to 100MBPS at the Open Space areas, will provide an incentive to use personal mobile computer equipment. In addition, the free Wi-Fi will serve as an introduction to advanced broadband that will increase subscribers demand to request services at their households and at their business locations. The complementary programs result in an increase in broadband demand that stimulates the economy by expanding the market for ISPs and providing more competitively priced service options for consumers.

Finally, the City requires the opportunity to connect its Emergency Operation Centers (EOCs) to the EOCs of Los Angeles County and the City of Los Angeles. Santa Monica also requires the connection for its disaster recovery systems to be located at least 30 miles outside of the City.

The total project budget of $1,249,900.00 is dependent upon funding by a NTIA grant of $999,920 and a 20% grant match by the City of $249,980. The $1.2M in spending on the project in Los Angeles County will generate a total economic impact of $2.67M during the estimated project period of 36 months. In total, the affordable broadband project is estimated to save and/or create 3 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs directly, and indirectly save and/or create 11 FTE jobs while offering public benefit to an estimated 11,924 subscribers.