Broadband USA Applications Database

**Applicant Name:** St. Louis Development Corporation

**Project Title:** North City Broadband

**Project Type:** Last Mile

_______________________ Executive Summary _____________________

a) St. Louis Development Corporation (SLDC) and St. Louis Regional Exchange Collaborative (or Regional Exchange Point, REP) have a plan for infrastructure which includes an efficient network of information delivery to respond to the continually increasing demand for Internet technology. In 2005, the City of St. Louis, St. Louis County, Washington University, and the Regional Chamber and Growth Association originated a not-for-profit entity known as REP. REP has been working to develop a regional infrastructure to support the local information technology (IT) industry as part of a broader economic development initiative. REP serves as a regional exchange point, a local Internet access method that increases efficiency of data exchange between service providers, businesses, and residents of the St. Louis region. Its objectives are to: • Provide access to more efficient broadband and wireless connectivity for unserved and underserved areas in the St. Louis region; • Enhance educational capabilities of schools, hospitals, cultural organizations, and other community anchor institutions; • Improve workforce development capabilities for businesses; • Facilitate access to and use of broadband services by public safety organizations in the region to improve their communication and response capabilities; • Improve efficiency for healthcare facilities; • Promote energy conservation and “Green Innovation”; • Introduce significant cost reduction and improved efficiencies for IT services used by K-12 schools, health care, government, and business; and • Help create and sustain jobs in the region. SLDC, along with REP, propose to establish an integrated fiber optic communication network in the St. Louis Region. REP is, under a separate BTOP application, proposing to acquire, through lease or purchase, use of existing "dark fiber" currently not in use, to provide Middle Mile connectivity throughout St Louis City, St. Louis County and St. Clair County (IL). REP's Middle Mile project anticipates the adoption of up to 100% of existing infrastructure, a key component in the overall vision for Regional broadband. SLDC is proposing new broadband infrastructure to tie into the existing in an unserved area in the region and is working with REP to further identify existing infrastructure, potential connections, partnerships, and leasing options. The proposed fiber optic infrastructure allows for route connectivity, future expansion, and fiber-to-the-premises (FTTP). Proposed routes follow public roads anticipated to be reconstructed in the next three years to meet ARRA shovel-ready requirements. The proposal to lay new fiber optic infrastructure in an unserved area will bring benefits of broadband and, ultimately, Smart Grid connectivity, to the City of St. Louis. The purpose of this network will be threefold: provide broadband access to an unserved, blighted area in North City; allow for a future Smart Grid network to be run by the local electric utility (AmerenUE); and provide new technology which will increase public safety. AmerenUE is interested in Smart Grid components to enhance and automate the monitoring and control of electrical distribution including, but not limited to: smart metering in homes, businesses and other
advanced management systems; automated lighting, plug-in vehicles, electricity bill payment and security services. There is also potential for utilizing technology to address public safety, including intelligent highway systems with security cameras and signs/signals connected to fiber. Fiber optic network capabilities are vast and, if designed for expansion, can eventually incorporate the electric grid, all communication technologies including telephone, home and public security, and traffic monitoring and control. b) The north St. Louis City neighborhood, also referred to as NorthSide Regeneration Area (NorthSide), has been economically depressed for over 60 years. The area has suffered from long-term neglect, extraordinary population loss, collapsing buildings and infrastructure, elevated crime against persons and property, low education levels, high employment, and health indicators that rival many third-world countries. The developer, NorthSide Regeneration LLC, has proposed redevelopment of 4634 parcels comprising about 1500 acres including right of way. The current condition of the infrastructure, including sewers and roads, is insufficient to support modern development, and the area is unserved in terms of communication technology. NorthSide's proposal includes improving or replacing inadequate infrastructure, as well as creating multiple employment hubs, a neighborhood retail center, and dispersed retail and residential development. The goal of the NorthSide project is to turn the Region and State's most distressed inner city area into a showcase for new concepts in network connectivity, green infrastructure, sustainability, and integrated mobility. The vision includes an integrated communications fiber network, two new highway interchanges to improve vehicular accessibility, a more sustainable energy infrastructure including smart grid components and district energy generation, a complete stormwater cleansing system, a fixed-guideway trolley to enhance mobility and connectivity, 17 miles of green streets, 21 of green pathways, 51 acres of new public parks, and new public use buildings. The proposed development includes urban density commercial and office space, and new and renovated single and multifamily housing. A multi-use communication network will bring economic development, education, smart energy solutions, and state-of-the-art safety technologies to the area, making it a forefront in technology and innovation. c) According to the 2000 Census, there are 4615 households and over 200 businesses that are located in the immediate proposed service area. As infrastructure development progresses, this project will make it possible to exponentially increase the number of households and businesses that have access to competitively priced broadband services. d) In the immediate proposed service area, there are 11 educational institutions, 2 healthcare facilities, 2 public safety entities, and 48 critical community organizations. e) This new infrastructure will bring broadband services to an unserved area and allow for uninterrupted access to higher levels of affordable online services and applications to institutions, schools, governments, businesses and households. The initial service provider offerings are expected to include: disaster recovery; video conferencing; data storage; energy management; IT outsourcing; and voice over IP services. Service providers will benefit from an increased demand for higher bandwidth Ethernet connections. Consumers will benefit from availability of higher bandwidth applications, lower costs, and a wider selection of services due to competition from service providers. In addition to the proposed infrastructure, we are also requesting funding for a broadband expert to work with REP to provide education, awareness, training access, equipment, and support to the community. f) Because SLDC and REP are non-profit entities with no interest in providing broadband services, they can develop and offer these interconnections in full compliance with NTIA’s non-discrimination and interconnection obligations and FCC’s Broadband Policy Statement. SLDC will work with REP, both of whom are vendor
unbiased, and will provide connections to any network operator or content provider. REP will display its policies on its website (www.stlrepcollaborative.org), notify members and providers of any changes to policies, provide open access to the public Internet, and maintain reasonable rates for all services. g) New fiber optic cable will be laid in currently unserved areas. All broadband services will meet or exceed a minimum standard for two-way data transmission of at least 768 kilobits per second (kbps) downstream and at least 200 kbps upstream to end users. h) Otis Williams will serve as Project Manager due to his 30 years of experience as a leader and manager of major projects and organizations. Otis will be working jointly with REP to implement the proposed infrastructure. With 4 years of experience developing a regional partnership, REP is uniquely qualified to develop, implement, and operate the proposed infrastructure. Because of its not-for-profit status, REP is able to purchase the rights to use existing fiber owned by for-profit companies. REP’s non-discrimination policy further assures that network operators and content providers will be incented to work with REP to take advantage of the opportunities created by this infrastructure. i) The cost of the Last Mile project is $10,043,158, which includes all costs associated with REP and funding to appoint a broadband expert to provide education, awareness, training access, equipment and support to the community. If both Last Mile and Middle Mile projects are awarded funding under BTOP, redundant costs will be excluded, and the request will decrease to $8,363,068. j) Broadband access is anticipated to be available to a minimum of 4615 households previously unserved. REP anticipates signing up a minimum of fifteen new members over the next three years specific to this proposed infrastructure. SLDC & REP are not providers of direct Internet services to end users; therefore, the subscriber estimate in Attachment H represents anticipated enrollment with local Internet Service Providers. k) We project up to 50 new jobs in the next 3 years, providing immediate job creation through the manufacturing, delivery, and installation of fiber and multi-duct infrastructure. We estimate 20 new jobs among construction, network operators, content providers, broadband technology education, and others; and 9 full time jobs within REP; and up to 21 jobs will result indirectly by subcontractors.