Executive Summary

The proposed funded service area is in an economically distressed area of the City of St Louis and is unserved in terms of communication technology. Over the past several decades, the area has lost residents and hope, and needs substantial investment in order to overcome its current challenges. Our intention with this CCI application is to reinvigorate the community by bringing broadband technologies to community anchor institutions and establishing a communication network that can be built upon to support current and future development. a) St. Louis Development Corporation (SLDC) and St. Louis Regional Exchange Collaborative, Inc. (or Regional Exchange Point, REP) have a high speed broadband vision 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 assisted in originating 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; 
- 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 to improve their communication and response capabilities; 
- Improve efficiency for healthcare facilities; 
- Promote energy conservation; 
- Introduce significant cost reduction and improved efficiencies for IT services used by schools, health care, government, and business; and 
- Help create and sustain jobs in the region. For REP to accomplish these objectives on a City-wide scale, it needs the infrastructure to support the vision. SLDC and REP propose to establish an integrated fiber optic communication network in the City of St. Louis Region by installing new broadband infrastructure in an unserved area. The proposed broadband infrastructure allows for route connectivity, expansion, and future fiber-to-the-premises in residential areas. b) The north St. Louis City area, also referred to as the NorthSide Regeneration Area or NorthSide, overlaps four neighborhoods and 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 current condition of all the infrastructure, including sewers and roads, is insufficient to support modern development. The developer, NorthSide Regeneration LLC, has proposed redevelopment of 4609 parcels comprising about 1500 acres including right of way. NorthSide Regeneration's proposal includes creating
a project-wide communication network; improving or replacing inadequate infrastructure; and creating urban density employment hubs, neighborhood retail centers, 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 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, new public parks, and new public use buildings. 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. The CCI grant will be a major step in implementing the revitalization of the NorthSide. Proposed broadband routes are consistent with the NorthSide Regeneration Redevelopment Area Tax Increment Financing (TIF) infrastructure plan, making it an ideal project to meet ARRA shovel-ready requirements. c) There are over 920 households and 62 businesses located in the proposed service area. The NorthSide plan has proposed an additional 57 residential units, 700,000 sq ft of retail, and 3,318,00 sq ft of office by the year 2020. d) In the proposed service area, there are 9 educational institutions, 2 public safety entities, and 10 critical community organizations. We will be directly connecting four community anchor institutions - a community college, fire station, police station, and non-profit homeless services facility. The proposed NorthSide Area plan has proposed an additional 2 schools, 2 public safety entities and multiple community organizations by the year 2020. e) This new infrastructure will allow for uninterrupted access to higher levels of affordable broadband services. 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 for the 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, notify members and providers of any changes to policies, provide open access to the public Internet, and maintain reasonable rates for all services. g) 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 the City of St Louis Board of Public Service (BPS) and REP to implement the proposed infrastructure. With 5 years of experience developing a regional partnership, REP is uniquely qualified to develop, implement, and operate the proposed infrastructure. REP’s non-discrimination policy assures that network operators and content providers will be incented to work with REP to take advantage of the opportunities created by this infrastructure. REP will be working with their technical advisors, RC Technologies and Klass, Hill &
Associates on development and delivery of end to end telecommunications solutions including network design, architecture and implementation. BPS will be managing the engineering, design, and construction portion of the project and have an existing partnership with SLDC. They are also currently managing other projects funded by the ARRA. i) The cost of the Middle Mile project is $5,259,555, which includes 4.3 miles of broadband infrastructure and costs associated with appointing a broadband expert to provide education, awareness, training access, equipment and support to the community. j) The Subscriber Estimate Attachment represents anticipated enrollment with local Internet Service Providers. k) We estimate this CCI grant will provide up to 57 new jobs in the next 3 years, providing immediate job creation through the manufacturing, delivery, and installation of fiber and multi-duct infrastructure. Within the 57 jobs, 36 represent direct and indirect effects and 21 are induced effects. We estimate 32 new jobs among construction, network operators, content providers, broadband technology education, and others; up to 21 jobs will result indirectly by subcontractors; and 4 full time jobs within REP, including network engineers (2), community outreach specialists (1), and education training and administrative support staff (1).