Applicant Name: CITY OF SAVANNAH

Project Title: Greater Savannah Connectivity Initiative

Project Type: Comprehensive Community Infrastructure

Executive Summary

Background The City of Savannah has maintained an active fiber network since the 1996 Olympics. Upon conclusion of the Games, the Georgia Department of Transportation deeded this network to the City. In 2005, the City began an extensive program aimed at expanding this network for City-related services throughout the downtown area. The City quickly realized there existed the opportunity to leverage the network for additional community benefit. In 2007, the City partnered with two local economic development agencies to further extend the network along the Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard corridor. Through a grant provided by the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA), Wireless Communities Grant (WCG) is an ongoing project that encapsulates a 52-block corridor, including two public housing developments and a busy commercial corridor, as well as several churches and schools. The Greater Savannah Connectivity Initiative (GSCI) seeks to build upon the strong foundation laid by the City and the GTA. The City is seeking $12.9 million through the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) to install a 40-mile, City-wide broadband fiber ring that will provide middle mile capabilities to support City services and last mile connectivity to several underserved neighborhoods. The GSCI will also provide a platform for new and exciting partnership opportunities with an array of community-based organizations, including non-profits, educational institutions and area healthcare providers. Project Description Coverage for the GSCI will be based on a network of 2,000 wireless nodes placed within the 40-mile area. A map of this coverage area is included in the Service Area section of this application. The objectives for this project are: (1) to provide middle mile capability to support and enhance key City services; and (2) to provide last mile services to several underserved Savannah neighborhoods. Summaries of these two key objectives are as follows: (1) Middle Mile Capability ' The GSCI will build upon past fiber expansion efforts, including City's partnership with the GTA. By expanding the existing fiber network to a 40-mile, City-wide ring, the GSCI will provide 100 square miles of connectivity to support applications for key City services. These services include Automated Transit Systems, Automated Meter Reading, and in-vehicle access for City vehicles (including 250 in-car radios for Savannah-Metro Police). The GSCI will also reduce the City's reliance on leased T1/DSL lines and wireless EVDO cards. (2) Last Mile Capability ' In addition to supporting key City services through enhanced middle-mile delivery, the GSCI will also expand last mile services to several of Savannah's most underserved neighborhoods. These neighborhoods include Woodville, Hudson Hill/Bayview, Cloverdale, Carver Heights, and West Savannah. According to the most recent census figures, these five neighborhoods represent approximately 14.4% of the City's population. In addition, nearly 31% (30.9) of residents in these communities presently live below the poverty line. Last mile capability will be expanded to Savannah Gardens on the City's east side, as well. Just over 22% (22.2) of residents
presently living in that area live below the poverty line. Key to this expansion would be the inclusion of the Sustainable Fellwood development and the Moses Jackson Community Center (Moses Jackson), both located in the West Savannah neighborhood. Sustainable Fellwood Sustainable Fellwood is a 27-acre mixed use development built on the former site of one of the City's oldest public housing communities. A Public/Private Partnership between the City, the Housing Authority of Savannah, and Savannah-based developer, Melaver, Inc., the development will eventually include 220 Public/Affordable Housing Units, 75 Senior Housing Units, and thirteen new moderate-income, first-time buyer homes. Sustainable Fellwood is also dedicated to implementing 'green' building practices wherever possible and is participating in the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED for Neighborhood Development pilot program. Expanding the City's last mile capabilities will provide reliable, inexpensive high-speed internet connectivity to Sustainable Fellwood households, 85% of whom will be living at or below the poverty line. Moses Jackson Moses Jackson is a City-owned facility located in the West Savannah neighborhood. It presently houses a number of services provided by the Leisure Services Bureau, including the Golden Age Senior Center and the Lady Bamford Early Childhood Education Center. In 2007, the City of Savannah's Mayor and Alderman approved the design and development of a 'one-stop' model that will expand the Center's focus to house a multitude of social services aimed at better assisting families in need. Research, design and development of this model are being conducted by the City's Bureau for Public Development. The expanded facility will be re-named the 'Moses Jackson Family Advancement Center' and will serve the Woodville, Hudson Hill/Bayview, Cloverdale, Carver Heights and West Savannah neighborhoods. Expansion of the City's fiber network will provide both immediate and future benefit to Moses Jackson. In its present function, Moses Jackson provides valuable services to the West Savannah community. The facility presently includes an educational lab containing 50 computers, served by a standard cable modem connection. Providing fiber to the facility will allow Moses Jackson to provide more efficient and effective services to individuals and programs using the facility. Moses Jackson will also benefit in the future when it expands into the Moses Jackson Family Advancement Center, a 'one-stop' social service center for a five neighborhood area. The total cost of this project is $16,209,271. The City will provide a 20% match of approximately $3.24 million. This proposed match is reflected in the "Other" column of the "Project Budget" section of this application. Key Partnerships The City has formed key partnerships with All Walks of Life, Inc. (AWOL) and Goodwill Industries of the Coastal Empire (Goodwill). Each entity will submit an application focused on one of the three BTOP funding areas. AWOL aims to address the growing digital divide in our area through its Reboot; Reuse Program. This program yields free or low-cost refurbished computers for use in high-poverty areas, including those outlined in the City's proposal. Goodwill seeks to increase affordable public access to computers through a three-pronged program consisting of cyber cafes, cyber access centers and low-cost cyber sales stations. Additional potential partnerships include the Housing Authority of Savannah, the Savannah Downtown Redevelopment Authority, Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools, and various community-based organizations dedicated to poverty reduction. These organizations include the Economic Opportunity Authority, Step Up Savannah's Poverty Reduction Initiative, the United Way of the Coastal Empire, and faith-based institutions in the target neighborhoods. Qualifications of Applicant The GSCI will be implemented under the auspices of the City's Information Technology (IT) Department. With a city population of 133,000 and a total county population of 230,000, Savannah and Chatham County public service agencies rely heavily on
informational services. The City, which supports the informational needs of the combined City-County Police and Fire departments, has an IT department of 36 and a total FY2009 budget of $5,493,689. The City will own and manage the GSCI network. Wireless internet service to residents will be provided through partnerships with an ISP. The proposed project will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of City operations and will reduce costs of individual user departments. The GSCI will also reduce overall costs by diminishing the City's reliance on leased T1/DSL lines and wireless EVDO cards. Job Creation The GSCI is expected to directly create at least two full-time positions. The first will be a contract project manager who will oversee the project implementation. An administrative position will also be created to assist the project manager with his/her day-to-day work. Both positions will be housed within the City's IT department. Total cost for these positions is $130,000. In addition, the City expects that the GSCI will create several IT-related positions during the design, construction and implementation process. This includes 15 to 20 positions associated with manufacturing, warehousing, engineering and support for the installation of networking equipment. This portion of the project budget totals to approximately $8 million. Other potential positions include 10 to 30 positions associated with fiber installation and 5 to 10 positions associated with professional services.