Digital Equity Strategic Plan

DRAFT
February 7, 2017

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Letter of Introduction from Mayor Sly James

February 2, 2017

Dear Citizens of Kansas City, Missouri,

It is my absolute pleasure to be your Mayor. I take the honor of serving as the Mayor of this entire City very seriously, and I strive to be responsive to what our residents need to thrive both in our City and beyond.

An area I have been particularly focused on during my time in office is digital equity. This means making sure that all our citizens have equal access to the Internet, the ability to purchase a low cost device to connect to the Internet, and the skills to use both the connection and the device. It means ensuring all of us can participate and compete in our digital, 21st century economy.

Our City has been a leader in national efforts to bridge the digital divide. We have participated in the White House and Department of Housing and Urban Development ConnectHome Initiative, the TechHire Initiative, the National Digital Inclusion Alliance, Next Century Cities, and other programs committed to digital inclusion. Locally, we have created organizations such as the Mayor's Bi-State Innovation Team, KC Digital Drive, and the Kansas City Coalition for Digital Inclusion to lead the charge on digital equity in the Kansas City region.

Even with our participation, however, too many of our residents still don't have equal digital access. Too many of our neighbors cannot access our open data platform, sign up for government services or healthcare online, take advantage of online learning and training opportunities, participate in the sharing economy or e-commerce, complete and submit homework assignments, and many other opportunities. Some of our senior citizens do not know how to operate a computer device or navigate the Web. Barriers still exist based on culture, age, disability, income, education, access to transportation and skill level. So, without a strategic focus and a commitment of necessary resources, digital inclusion efforts in our City cannot keep pace with advances in technology.

It is clear that society will continue to become increasingly digital, and that participation in a digital society helps to level the playing field. Today, I will introduce a resolution to the City Council in support of a Digital Equity Strategic Plan, in which we outline various pathways toward creating digital equity for the entire City. As part of this Plan, the input of the public as well as digital inclusion experts was solicited and incorporated to assure we are meeting real needs. The plan begins the next phase of our journey towards digital equity. Please join me in taking the action it recommends, so we may continue and expand our digital leadership on behalf of all Kansas Citians.
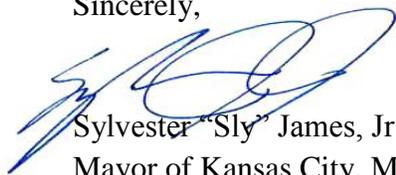
Sincerely,

Sylvester "Sly" James, Jr.
Mayor of Kansas City, Missouri

Purpose and Overview

The purpose of Kansas City, Missouri's Digital Equity Strategic Plan is to frame the issue of the Digital Divide for the Mayor, City Council, City staff, corporate citizens, and the community at large, and to promote a shared understanding of the need to take action to ensure all Kansas Citians are able to participate in an increasingly digital society. This Plan outlines the course by which the City can create opportunities for all residents to have equal access to and utilization of the digital economy.

The development and deployment of this Plan has been directed by the Mayor and City Council, and is meant to demonstrate the City's commitment to Digital Equity, engagement and efficiencies, with the intentional leveraging of other future and current City strategic priorities, such as the City's Digital Roadmap and Smart City Initiative, and partnerships with others actively engaged in Digital Inclusion. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list of Digital Inclusion programs or other possibilities, and the Mayor, City Council and City staff are encouraged to explore additional potential projects, programs, and funding opportunities that align with the priorities set forth in this Plan. This Plan is a living document, intended to evolve over time as technologies and needs change.

The Plan, which is detailed in this document, is fourfold: 1) clarify the current state of the Digital Divide and Digital Equity both around the world and locally, 2) describe work-to-date in Kansas City on Digital Equity, and 3) propose next steps (aka Priorities and Pathways) for Mayoral and City Council approval to advance Digital Equity in Kansas City, Missouri.

For the convenience of the reader, words and phrases important for understanding the concepts presented in the Plan are defined in the next section.

In addition, two Appendices provide (A) additional helpful resources, and (B) a draft of the City Council resolution adopting the Plan.

Definitions and Glossary

Access: the ability to connect to the Internet using a personal computer, lap-top computer, tablet or any other mobile device.

Broadband: a connection to the Internet with minimum download speeds of 25 mbps and minimum upload speeds of 3 mbps.

Community Connection: Google Fiber gigabit service offered free of charge to up to 300 schools, community centers, libraries and government buildings, as a term of Google's development agreement with the City of Kansas City, Missouri.

Connect Home Initiative: a 2015 initiative of the White House and Department of Housing and Urban Development to partner with 28 communities to provide broadband connectivity, training and educational opportunities to families of K-12 residents of properties owned by local Housing Authorities.

Connect All Initiative: a 2016 White House initiative to help Americans from across the country, at every income level, get online and have the tools to take full advantage of the Internet by: 1) increasing the affordability of broadband for low-income Americans, 2) initiating a national service effort to deliver digital literacy skills, 3) increasing access to affordable devices, 4) developing a tool to support broadband planning, 5) bringing together private sector companies helping to deliver affordable connectivity, and 6) marshaling philanthropic support for Digital Inclusion.

Connect Ed Initiative: a 2013 White House initiative to provide 20 million more K-12 students access to broadband in their classrooms and libraries by upgrading connectivity, training teachers, and encouraging private sector innovation.

Digital Citizen: a person who engages in government, politics and society by using the Internet.

Digital Divide: the difference between those who have access to the Internet and related technologies and those who do not. These differences are highlighted in categories of lack of access to the Internet at home, inability to afford Internet service, concerns of privacy and lack of understanding of the relevance of the Internet.

Digital Equity: the condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy and economy as is necessary for access to essential services, civic and cultural participation, lifelong learning, employment, entrepreneurship, and economic mobility.

Digital Inclusion: activities necessary to ensure that all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, have access to and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). This includes 5 elements: 1) affordable, robust broadband Internet service; 2) Internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user; 3) access to Digital Life Skills training; 4) quality technical support; and 5) applications and online content designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation and collaboration.

Digital Inclusion Fund: a charitable fund managed by the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation to provided funding to nonprofits engaged in Digital Inclusion and Digital Equity activities in the Kansas City metropolitan area.

Digital Inclusion Summit: the biennial conference sponsored by the Kansas City Coalition for Digital Inclusion to convene Digital Inclusion partners in the Kansas City metropolitan area for the purpose of sharing best practices for providing Digital Inclusion and creating Digital Equity.

Digital Life Skills: basic skills for using electronic equipment and the Internet, including but not limited to, turning a computer on or off, Internet browsing, completing online homework assignments, filling out a job or college application, setting up an email account, online banking, and signing up for insurance coverage, and protecting personal and confidential electronic information.

Digital Roadmap: announced by the City Council in 2015, the Digital Roadmap outlines the Plan for our digital future, including ways to collect and analyze data, leverage resources across all City departments, share information, and protect electronic information. (Appendix A.1)

Digital Scholars: A City program, in partnership with the Full Employment Council (FEC) and members of the Kansas City Coalition for Digital Inclusion, such as Surplus Exchange, Connecting for Good, and WEB DuBois Learning Center, through which members of the FEC's service population ages 16 - 24 complete paid on the job tech training opportunities at local organizations providing Digital Inclusion services to City residents. (Appendix A.2)

Digital Upcycling: A City program, in partnership with Surplus Exchange, through which the City donates its surplus electronic equipment to Surplus Exchange for triaging and refurbishing according to e-Stewards Enterprise Certification standards, and the

electronic equipment is either donated or made available for low-cost purchase by non-profit organizations or low income individuals. (Appendix A.3)

Distance Learning: utilizing the Internet as a method of learning through online educational platforms, classes and lectures without having to attend classes in a physical classroom. Distance learning may include formal educational institutions, subscription based educational platforms, free educational platforms or self-directed learning.

Distance Working: employment carried out from a remote location such as the employee's home. Also known as teleworking.

E-stewards Enterprise Certification: a global commitment to the responsible recycling of electronic waste, through recognition by the Basel Action Network (BAN) as an eStewards Enterprise. The BAN designation recognizes cities, counties and companies that take concrete measures to eliminate the export of hazardous electronic wastage (e-waste) to developing countries by using Certified eStewards Recyclers to manage their electronic waste.

Federal Communications Commission (FCC): the governmental body charged with regulatory oversight of interstate and international communications by radio, television, wire, satellite and cable in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and US territories. The commission is the United States' primary authority for communications laws, regulation and technological innovation.

Gigabit Service: broadband speeds up to 1 gigabit per second (Gbps).

Global Connect International Connectivity Steering Group (Steering Group): a group created by Executive Order in 2016 to strategically improve coordination and catalyze further action to increase Internet connectivity globally in support of the Global Connect Initiative.

Homework Gap: the situation of students who are assigned homework that requires them to use the Internet but who do not have Internet access at home.

Internet: a global computer network consisting of interconnected networks using standardized communication protocols and using wired and wireless access. Speeds for communication vary from under 8 megabits to as much as 100 megabits per second for very fast broadband cable.

Internet Service Provider: a company that provides its subscribers with access to the Internet and related services.

Kansas City Coalition for Digital Inclusion (Coalition for Digital Inclusion): an organization of practitioners, businesses, and other stakeholders, led by the Kansas City Public Library, Connecting for Good, KC Digital Drive, and the City of Kansas City, MO, the vision of which is for every citizen and household in the Kansas City metropolitan area to have access to the Internet, the equipment needed to use it and the skills to participate in a digital society.

KC Digital Drive: an organization created by Mayor Sly James of Kansas City, Missouri and Mayor Joe Reardon of Kansas City, Kansas to implement the recommendations of the Mayors Bi-State Innovation Team.

Lifeline: a Federal Communications Commission program designed to provide low-income Americans with financial assistance to purchase affordable phone service, for which efforts are underway to modernize the subsidy so that it can be used to help make broadband more affordable.

LRNG: an ecosystem of learning that combines in-school, out-of-school, employer-based and online learning experiences into a network that is open and inviting to all youth, working together with schools, city leaders, businesses and community institutions such as libraries and museums.

National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA): a unified voice of leaders of local community organizations, public libraries, towns and other institutions for home broadband access, public broadband access, personal devices and local technology training and support programs. NDIA works collaboratively to craft, identify and disseminate financial and operational resources for Digital Inclusion programs while serving as a bridge to policymakers and the general public.

Next Century Cities (NCC): a national membership organization supporting community leaders across the country as they seek to ensure that all have access to fast, affordable, and reliable Internet.

National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA): is the Executive Branch agency founded during the Clinton Administration, which is principally responsible for advising the President on telecommunications and information policy issues. NTIA's programs and policymaking focus largely on expanding broadband Internet access and adoption in America, expanding the use of spectrum by all users, and ensuring that the Internet remains an engine for continued innovation and economic growth.

Net Neutrality: the principle that Internet service providers should enable access to all content and applications regardless of the source, and without favoring or blocking particular products or websites.

Universal Services Schools and Libraries Program (E-Rate): a discount set by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) that schools and public libraries receive on telecommunications, Internet and internal connections.

Small Cell Technology: a type of wireless that uses low-powered radio access nodes having a range of 10 meters to 1 or 2 kilometers, as opposed to a macrocell which has a range of several kilometers.

Smart City Initiative: a multi-phase project initiated in May 2016 that will enable the City of Kansas City to collect and use real-time data using sensors and other technology to deliver basic services more efficiently, and attract economic development, entrepreneurs and residents.

TechHire: a 2015 White House initiative to expand local tech sectors by building tech talent pipelines in communities across the country. TechHire includes three main components: (1) More than 20 communities with over 300 employer partners signed on to pilot accelerated training strategies, (2) large private-sector companies and national organizations committed to providing tools to support these TechHire communities, and (3) President Obama's pledge of $100 millon in federal funding.

The Digital Divide

The term "Digital Divide" was first coined in the 1990's as a result of the passage of the High Performance Computing Act, which funded the Internet, and the resulting widespread public and commercial use of the Internet. Even then, the Clinton Administration began to wonder if access to the Internet and related technologies would be equitable distributed among citizens. Digital Inclusion is now recognized worldwide as means to narrowing the Digital Divide by improving our society, removing power differentials, increasing shared understanding, and gaining a free and democratic world.
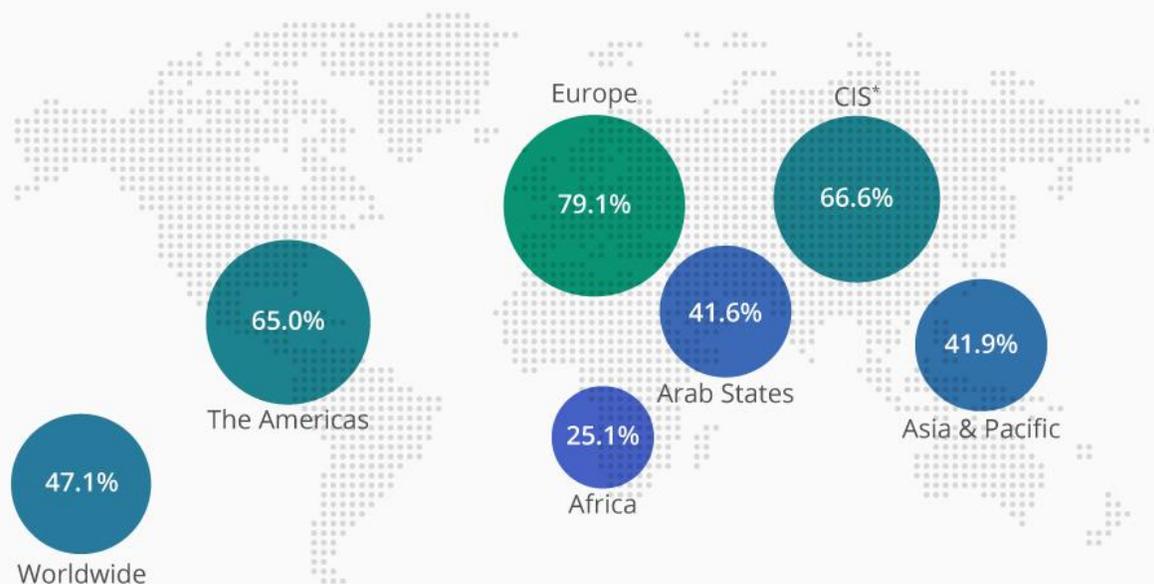
Around the World

The Digital Divide is more than just a shorthand way of differentiating between those citizens who can regularly take advantage of the Internet and those who cannot. The

term also suggests *causes* and *effects* of not being able to go "online". This can be seen both around the World and locally, and manifests in numerous ways that challenge our collective ability to advance in an equitable society.

According to the Global Connect International Connectivity Steering Group, over 4 billion of the world's 7.2 billion people do not yet have access to the Internet. 35% of Americans do not have access to the Internet.

The Not So World Wide Web
Estimated number of internet users per 100 inhabitants in 2016

Europe
79.1%

CIS*
66.6%

The Americas
65.0%

Arab States
41.6%

Asia & Pacific
41.9%

Africa
25.1%

Worldwide
47.1%

@StatistaCharts   * Commonwealth of Independent States
Source: International Telecommunication Union

statista

At a national level, a significant *cause* for being offline is income. 34 million people are currently disconnected from digital life, because they are unable to afford online services and activities. According to a 2013 Pew study, Americans making under $30,000 per year are eight times more likely than affluent adults not to use the Internet. For these lower-income families, the ability to be a **consumer** is limited by the lack of ability to purchase Internet-ready devices, to pay monthly connectivity fees, or because they do not view the Internet as important in their lives. 19% of American cite the cost of owning a computer or paying for the Internet as the reason they do not have access. 92% of non-users surveyed said they were not interested in going online.

The *effect* of being offline at home is a significant barrier for the **learners**. According to a 2015 article in Education Week, the Federal Communications Commission stated that in some localities, 70% of teachers assign homework requiring Internet access, with only 33% of students able to access the Web at home.

There is also an *effect* on the ease with which **digital citizen** can be civically engaged. As evidenced by current 2017 political engagement, social media makes learning about and participating in ad hoc, or quickly organized activities, much easier. But in 2015, a Santa Clara University panel on "Civic Engagement in the Digital Age" identified poor broadband access as a key barrier to engagement, with greater access directly correlated to those earning $75,000 a year and above.

In addition, lack of access to the Internet appears to exacerbate the economic situation of families. It is more than inconvenience. It increases economic disadvantage, especially for potential **employees** unable to access online job search tools. Per a 2015 report by the Pew Research Center, 79% of job hunters utilized online resources in their most recent job search and 34% say these online resources were the *most* important tool available to them. Today, because of the Digital Divide, it takes offline Americans more time longer time to find employment, in part because they cannot find opportunities or apply for them online.

Based on the same Pew study, 28% of Americans who are currently not employed, say that it would *not* be easy to create a resume, 22% say they would have a difficult time filling out an online job application, and 19% indicated it would be difficult to contact employers via email, find job lists online, or research services for job seekers. In addition, the study indicates that roughly 20% of adults with a high school diploma or less feel it would *not* be easy to contact a potential employer via email, research services for job seekers online, fill out an online application, or access lists on the Internet of available jobs. Almost 33%, who haven't attended college stated that it would *not* be easy for them to build a resume or use social media to advertise their job skills. In short, the Digital Divide between those comfortable using the Internet and those who aren't leads to a significant employment disadvantage.

The *effect* of being offline is evident for **entrepreneurs**, as well. Today, 24% of Americans report earning money from the digital 'platform economy'. These platforms allow users to earn money in several ways, including selling their goods or services. It also allows them the flexibility of working at times and places of their own choosing. However, the ability to participate in these online sharing platforms, or to participate in other types of e-commerce, is dependent on Internet access. According to Pew in 2016, 41% of those with incomes of $100,000 have participated in the sharing economy on

four or more occasions, while only 13% of those with incomes of $30,000 annually have used these services at all.

Many national programs have been initiated to address both the causes and the effects of the Digital Divide. The White House has launched several initiatives aimed at making the Internet more affordable and available to those most impacted by the Digital Divide - students and low income families. From ConnectEd, ConnectHome, ConnectAll; efforts to modernize the Federal Communications Lifeline Program and E-Rate Program; and Net Neutrality legislation, the federal government has gone to great lengths to legislate and convene national partners to contribute their time, talent and treasure toward narrowing the Digital Divide.

The federal government has also recently made existing funding sources available for use for Digital Inclusion purposes. In 2016, the Department of Housing and Urban Development issued a rule change allowing Community Development Block Grants to be used toward Digital Inclusion programs and organizations. The Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas issued guidance in 2016 allowing Community Redevelopment Act (CRA) money to be used toward Digital Inclusion. Because these are new purposes for existing funding streams, Digital Inclusion organizations and programs must share in the opportunity to receive these funds with organizations that have historically qualified for this funding.

Several national organizations have formed to advocate for policies that will further Digital Equity efforts or to provide Digital Inclusion programs and services directly to users. Next Century Cities and the National Digital Inclusion Alliance are two national membership organizations that work to draft and otherwise effect public policy in favor of Digital Equity. Both organizations have driven the national conversation on expanding the Lifeline and E-Rate programs to include Broadband, and advocating for Net Neutrality legislation both on the federal and state levels.

Locally

Kansas City is unique in many ways. We are a city of 319 square miles with a population of approximately 462,986 people. Median income for our residents is $45,320, with 19% of residents living below the poverty level, and 10% of residents being unemployed. One in five households do not have access to a car.

It should be noted that connectivity in Kansas City is not equally distributed. As the graphs below show, not only does access to the Internet at home vary based on annual household income, it also varies based on the area of the City in which residents live.

Internet Access at Home by Income and Council District
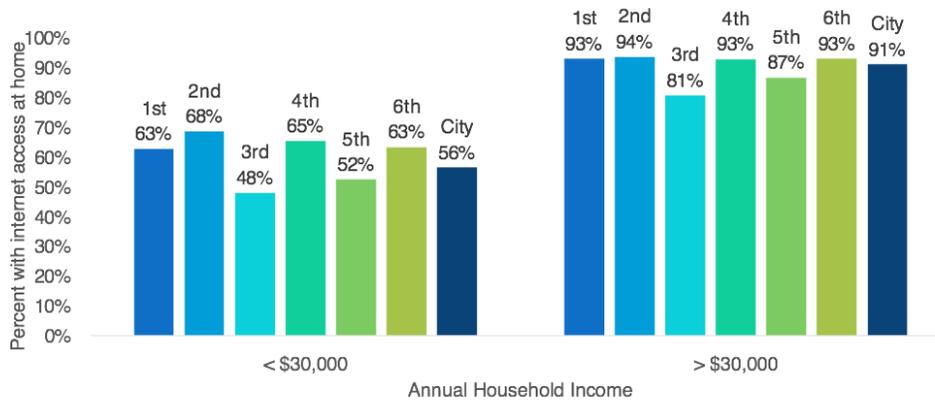
Source: Citizen Survey, FY2015-16
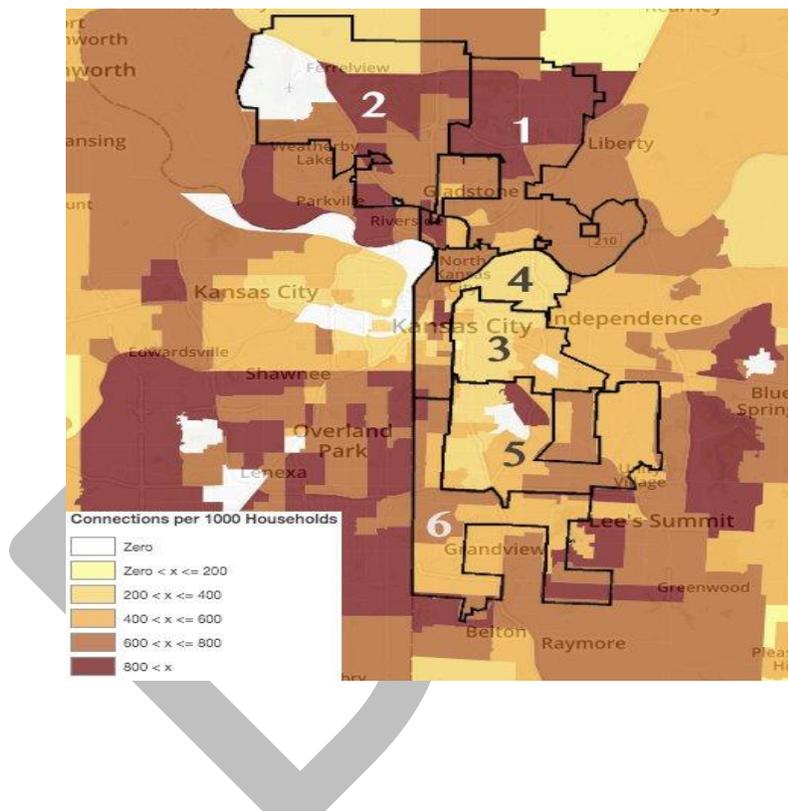
For a city with a large geographic footprint, we have a relatively small population. This imbalance poses unique challenges for connecting community assets with residents. Community assets, such as libraries, community centers, and other public spaces, are often spatially dispersed given our large land mass, making access to those without transportation even more challenging. With a low median income level and high levels of poverty and unemployment, many of our residents cannot afford both access to the Internet and other basic needs.

Google Fiber's arrival benefited Kanas City in numerous ways. Equally important to the Google's provision of Gigabit fiber was the work Google Fiber did to access Internet access and interest in our City. In order to properly deploy Gigabit fiber throughout the City, Google Fiber conducted an assessment of Internet usage in Kansas City, as well as a series of community sign up events for residents to express interest in fiber service to the home.

The assessment, "The State of Broadband Internet Access in Kansas City," highlighted detailed the state of the Digital Divide in Kansas City. It showed that while many Kansas Citians seem to recognize the value of the Web, not enough of us enjoy adequate access to it. At the time of the study, 17% of Kansas Citians were not going online at all, and 8% were only using dial-up or slow speed wireless connections. It also showed that one of the primary barriers to online access was cost. 28% of those who didn't use the Internet said that they didn't go online because either they lacked a personal computer or they could not afford connectivity fees. 41% of respondents said they did not go online because it was not relevant to their lives. And, while Pew Research reports that 76% of teachers across the nation require students to complete assignments online, 70% of children in the Kansas City School District did not have Internet access in the home.

The Google Fiber signup campaigns, which focused on reaching certain subscriber thresholds in neighborhoods they termed "fiberhoods," also underscored the Digital Divide in our City. Initially, residents in economically distressed neighborhoods were slow to subscribe for Gigabit service. The City, Google Fiber, KC Digital Drive and others community stakeholders stepped up to ensure that not only was gigabit service made available in the majority of fiberhoods in the City, but to ensure there was a larger and more concerted effort to ensure all residents understood the relevance of the Internet to their daily lives and have Internet access, equipment and skills.

Work- to-Date

In an effort to promote Digital Equity for our residents, the City of Kansas City, Missouri has been actively engaged in many Digital Inclusion initiatives over the last 5 years. Foremost, the City, along with other practitioners and stakeholders in the digital and technological community, co-founded the Kansas City Coalition for Digital Inclusion ("Coalition for Digital Inclusion") with KC Digital Drive, the Kansas City Public Library, Connecting for Good, and the Linwood YMCA. The Coalition for Digital Inclusion has grown to include municipal governments, the Housing Authority of Kansas City, libraries, school districts, Internet service providers, practitioners, and foundations, from all over the Kansas City metropolitan area. Notably, every Digital Equity initiative and program the City has accomplished to date has been through a

collective effort with the Coalition for Digital Inclusion and other local and national partners. While Kansas City still has much work to do to map existing services; connect residents to services; identify programmatic, service and funding gaps; and identify funding sources for Digital Inclusion programs, the existence and work of the Coalition for Digital Inclusion has allowed us to make great progress toward Digital Equity.

The most remarkable initiatives in which the City has been involved include:

- Establishment of the Open Data Platform
- Inclusion of 300 Google Fiber Community Connections in the City's and Google Fiber's development agreement
- Co-founding the Mayor's Bi-State Innovation Team
- Creation of KC Digital Drive
- Co-founding the Kansas City Coalition for Digital Inclusion
- Implementation of Google Fiber Community Connections at 164 schools, libraries, community centers and City-owned buildings
- Completion the infrastructure improvements and gigabit fiber connectivity in the Gregg Klice, Malborough and Garrison Community Centers.
- Sponsorship of the Digital Inclusion Summits in 2014 and 2016
- Adoption of the Digital Roadmap
- Selection as 1 of 20 pilot communities for participation in the White House TechHire Initiative
- Selection as 1 of 28 pilot communities for participation in the White House and Department of Housing and Urban Development ConnectHome Initiative in partnership with the Housing Authority of Kansas City
- Certification as an eStewards Enterprise
- Creation of the Digital Upcycling Program
- Creation of the Digital Scholars Program
- Launch of the Smart City Initiative
- Host of the inaugural National Digital Inclusion Alliance Summit in 2016
- Selection as a White House ConnectAll & Community Connectivity community
- Selection as 1 of 8 LRNG cities

Policy Priorities and Pathways to Digital Equity

This critical component of this Plan is an outline of public policy priorities for furthering Digital Equity in Kansas City, and, in a broader sense, to advance the participation of all Kansas City residents in the digital economy. Six policy priorities are defined. Five of these relate directly to helping the five types of Internet users, shown in the graphic. The sixth describes the continued collaboration necessary to achieve Digital

Equity. These policy priorities encapsulate the areas of highest need for promoting Digital Equity. Keeping these priorities at top of mind standing alone and when making other policy decisions will enable our City to advance Digital Equity in incremental ways both large and small, and will allow us to have a meaningful impact on the lives of residents. After the adoption of this Plan, the City will work with the Coalition for Digital Inclusion and other individuals and organizations focused on Digital Equity to advance these policy priorities by pursing recommended pathways toward Digital Equity.
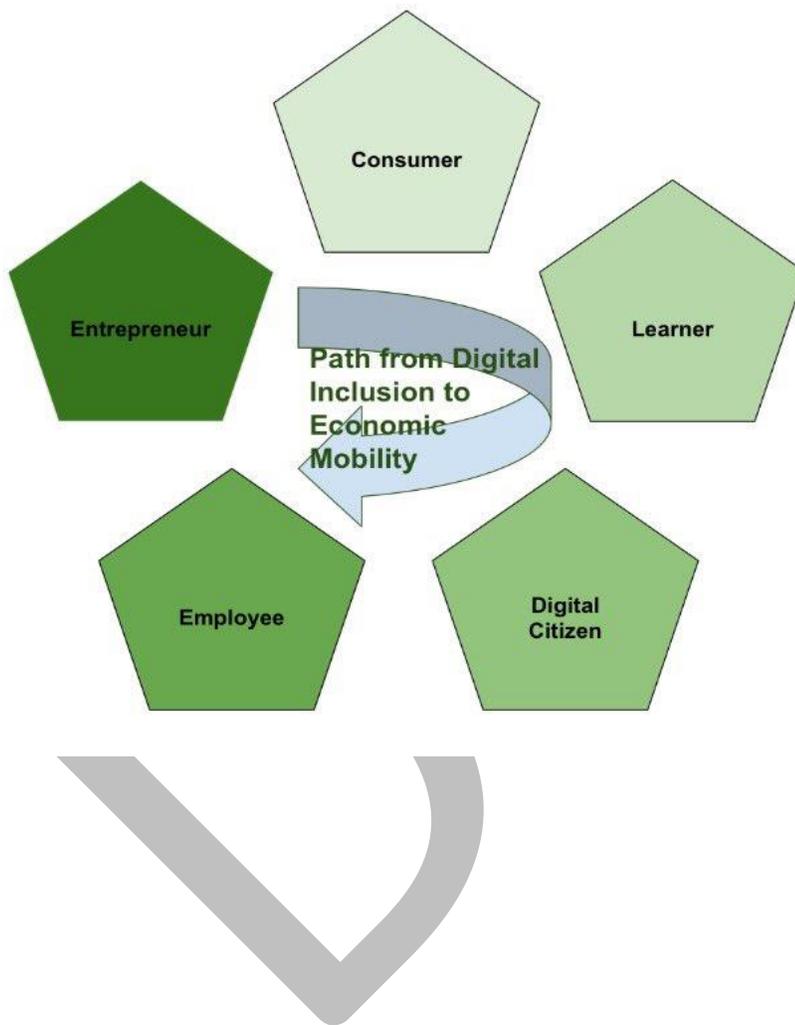
Six Policy Priorities

➢ Access to Affordable Broadband, Devices, And Digital Literacy Training for the Consumer

➢ Internet Use for Education for the Learner

➢ Internet Use to Promote Civic Responsibility for the Digital Citizen

➢ Internet Use to Promote Employment

➢ Internet Use for Business and Job Creation for the Entrepreneur

➢ Collaboration to Promote Ongoing Digital Equity Opportunities

To make the priorities actionable, pathways to pursue these priorities are also described. These pathways take the form of 21 recommendations presented to the City Council for pursuit. The recommendations are broken down by priority, advocating the development of a Roadmap and "Quick Win" projects for each.

Digital Equity Policy Priorities

1. Access to Affordable Broadband, Devices, and Digital Literacy Training

The initial priority for Digital Equity must be Access. To participate in the digital economy, potential users of the Internet must first have access to it, either at home or in conveniently located public spaces. There must be affordable options to purchase the Internet, equipment to utilize the Internet, and software to protect their personal information. They must also be aware of their options for purchasing the Internet among our Internet service providers. They must be educated on the utility of the Internet and the opportunities and services available online. They must have the basic skills for operating a computer, navigating the web, and keeping their information safe. Language, physical ability, literacy and other access barriers must be eliminated. These are the minimum elements necessary for potential users to become actual users, taking advantage of opportunities to complete everyday tasks online, such as online shopping, banking, completing and review assignments, paying bills, signing up for insurance,

accessing government services, applying for jobs, gathering news, socializing with distance loved ones, and enjoying games and other entertainment.

2. Internet Use for Educational Purposes

With the Access priority as a foundation, the next priority for Digital Equity is enabling Internet use for educational purposes. A learner should be able to use online resources to participate in formal K-12 instruction, post-secondary programs and training opportunities, online learning websites, or self-guided learning. He or she should be able to use the Internet in real-time through distance learning or send and receive information before or after class. Initiatives such as ConnectHome have made a positive impact on student ability to complete assignments at home. Still, Internet use for educational purposes is arguably the most significant opportunity highlighted in this Plan, since the inability to complete assignments online is negatively affecting students in our educational institutions, particularly in the Kansas City Public School District, and is thereby hindering our future.

3. Internet Use to Promote Civic Responsibility

Another follow-on priority for ensuring Digital Equity is to foster opportunities for individuals and organizations to participate in community affairs through the Internet. Here a user can become a better citizen by contributing to public policy discussions on social media and government interaction websites like Next Door and MySidewalk, or the 311 action center, with friends, family, and other community activists online. People around the globe are utilizing the Internet to stay abreast of worldwide events, voice their opinions, monitor government programs and services, and engage in their communities. Ensuring that all residents have equitable access to the Internet ensures that all voices are heard in our democracy.

4. Internet Use to Promote Employment

An equally important priority is to enable Internet use for teleworking, remote working and Distance Working. For an employee, this represents the ability to leverage education to find employment in Distance Working (telework) or technology jobs that have been made available by employers remotely or virtually. The ability to work

remotely opens tremendous opportunity for all, but especially the disabled, by eliminating the need to commute to and from traditional places of work.

5. Internet Use for Business and Job Creation

Another priority for Digital Equity is helping the entrepreneur to leverage online resources and promote economic mobility. For small business owners, this creates more independence, and, potentially more jobs. Symmetric Gigabit speed Internet availability greatly enhances the potential growth of homebased businesses and enables employers to create Distance Working opportunities that not only reduce employees commuting costs but can provide business resilience in times of high demand or business interruption.

6. Collaboration to Promote Other Digital Equity Opportunities

The final priority for Digital Equity is to continue the City's prioritization of and collaboration in Broadband initiatives. The City must consider Digital Equity when selecting its legislative priorities. This action promotes community locally, regionally, and nationally, as well as heightening awareness and providing valuable input into achieving the City's other Digital Equity priorities. Examples of such collaboration over the last five years include participation in the Kansas City Coalition for Digital Inclusion, Next Century Cities, National Digital Inclusion Alliance, the White House/HUD ConnectHome Initiative and the TechHire Program, and advocacy for Net Neutrality and Lifeline.

<u>21 Digital Equity Pathways</u>

The pathways presented here take the form of 21 recommendations to the Mayor and City Council, on action that can be taken advance the City's policy priorities for Digital Equity.

ACCESS
1. Direct the City Manager to develop an overall 3 Year Roadmap to include increasing Digital Equity Access within the City. The Roadmap should be presented to Council within 6 months of adoption of this Plan. The Roadmap should address the three elements of Access, with emphasis on infrastructure for advancing a wireless network. The elements are:
   - Broadband Infrastructure – Wireless/Wired
   - Device

☐ Training on Basic Usage

2. Direct the City Manager to identify and present 1- 3 "Quick Win" projects to the City Council involving Access. Selection of these projects should be based on their tangible and intangible return on investment and be presented for consideration within 6 months of adoption of this Plan. The presentation should identify the following:
   ☐ Funding Source(s) expected for project completion
   ☐ Project Team involved, including both private and public partners and expected project management staff
   ☐ ROI projections
   ☐ Timeline projections
   ☐ Criteria for measuring success

   Quick Win Projects to be considered include, but are not limited to the following:
   ☐ Implementation of a Dig Once Policy
   ☐ Establishment of a program to provide free Internet services for recipients of Minor Home Repair & Weatherization Program benefits
   ☐ Addition of Digital Equity into Health Community Health Improvement Plan goal

   ☐ Adoption of a resolution supporting a standard agreement for use when negotiating with all small cell, wireless communications and Internet service providers that includes some expectation of contribution to Digital Equity

EDUCATION
3. Direct the City Manager to develop an overall 3 Year Roadmap including promoting the use of the Internet for Education within the City. The Roadmap should be presented to Council within 6 months of adoption of this Plan. The Roadmap must include Plans to narrow the Homework Gap by creating a public private partnership that will ensure access to the Internet and a computing device for K-12 students, and access to training and post-secondary programs, distance learning opportunities, and informal online and self-guided learning opportunities for all Kansas City residents.

4. Direct the City Manager to identify and present 1-3 "Quick Win" projects to the City Council involving Education. Selection of these projects should be based on their tangible and intangible return on investment and be presented for approval adoption by the Council within 6 months of the adoption of this Plan. The presentation should identify the following:

- Funding Source(s) expected for project completion
- Project Team involved, including both private and public partners and expected project management staff
- ROI projections
- Timeline projections
- Criteria for measuring success

Quick Win Projects to be considered include, but are not limited to the following:

- Establishment and mapping of a network of community learning centers to ensure that students have access to connectivity, equipment, training and support within walking distance of their home. It is recommended that this would be completed in collaboration with the City's community partners.
- Establishment of a shared online learning center (i.e. the WikiKC Community Learning Center) with local partners to allow citizens to follow an educational and career path with a user experience that is the same regardless of which partner is providing the service
- Identification of opportunities to engaged the business community and non-profit partners in the Digital Scholars Program and Digital Upcycling Program

CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

5. Direct the City Manager to develop an overall 3 Year Roadmap to include increasing Digital Equity based Civic Responsibility within the City. The Roadmap should be presented to Council within 6 months of adoption of this Plan.

6. Direct the City Manager to identify and present 1-3 "Quick Win" projects to the City Council involving Civic Responsibility. Selection of these projects should be based on their tangible and intangible return on investment and be presented for consideration within 6 months of adoption of this Plan. The presentation should identify the following:
   - Funding Source(s) expected for project completion
   - Project Team involved, including both private and public partners and expected project management staff
   - ROI projections
   - Timeline projections
   - Criteria for measuring success

Quick Win Projects to be considered include, but are not limited to the following:

- Assessment by the City Manager's office of the City's open data, performance management, and 311 action center with closure of any significant gap(s) identified
- Establishment of a technical assistance hotline for the city website
- Expansion of the City Employee Volunteer Program to encourage City employees to use City-paid volunteer time to support non-profits engaged in Digital Equity
- Development within the City Manager's office of a program for digital literacy, consumer safety and privacy training for city employees for using city digital equipment, email, and Internet
- Development within the City Manager's office of a program to publicize a Digital Equity relevancy campaign through City Communications, and to publicize to city staff opportunities for purchasing low cost equipment and the availability of digital literacy training in KCMO
- Development of a program within the City Manager's office to work with the Full Employment Council on a pipeline of employment from the Tech Hire Program and/or Digital Scholars Program to City Hall

WORKFORCE

7. Direct the City Manager to develop an overall 3 Year Roadmap to include increasing opportunities for employment through Internet Access. The Roadmap should be presented to Council within 6 months of adoption of this Plan.

8. Direct the City Manager to identify and present 1-3 "Quick Win" projects to the City Council involving Digital Equity for employment. Selection of these projects should be based on their tangible and intangible return on investment and be presented for consideration within 6 months of the adoption of this Plan. The presentation should identify the following:
- Funding Source(s) expected for project completion
- Project Team involved, including both private and public partners and expected project management staff
- ROI projections
- Timeline projections
- Criteria for measuring success

Quick Win Projects to be considered include, but are not limited to the following:
- Collaboration with community partners to identify and promote Distance Working opportunities for persons with disabilities, who may benefit from employment that does not require commuting

☐ Development of a program within the City Manager's office to work with the Full Employment Council on a pipeline of employment from the TechHire program and/or Digital Scholars Program to City Hall

BUSINESS AND JOB CREATION

9. Direct the City Manager to develop an overall 3 Year Roadmap to include increasing Digital Equity based Business and Job Creation. The Roadmap should be presented to Council within 6 months of adoption of this Plan.

10. Direct the City Manager to identify and present1-3 "Quick Win" projects to the City Council involving Business and Job Creation. Selection of these projects should be based on their tangible and intangible return on investment and be presented for consideration within 6 months of adoption of this Plan. The presentation should identify the following:
   ☐ Funding Source(s) expected for project completion
   ☐ Project Team involved, including both private and public partners and expected project management staff
   ☐ ROI projections
   ☐ Timeline projections
   ☐ Criteria for measuring success

   Quick Win Projects to be considered include, but are not limited to the following:
   ☐ Develop a program to enable home based and small business owners to get online and grow their business through e-commerce
   ☐ Direct the City Manager to review and confirm home-based business regulations, to include zoning regulations, business license regulations, and other related regulations, to ensure compatibility with the current state of the digital economy

COLLABORATION

11. Direct the City Manager to develop an overall 3 Year Roadmap for continued participation in collaborative efforts around Digital Equity. The Roadmap should be presented to Council within 6 months of adoption of this Plan.

12. Direct the City Manager to identify and present1-3 "Quick Win" projects to the City Council involving Collaboration on Digital Equity. Selection of these projects should be based on their tangible and intangible return on investment and be presented for consideration within 6 months of adoption of this Plan. The presentation should identify the following:

- ◻ Funding Source(s) expected for project completion
- ◻ Project Team involved, including both private and public partners and expected project management staff
- ◻ ROI projections
- ◻ Timeline projections
- ◻ Criteria for measuring success

Quick Win Projects to be considered include, but are not limited to the following:
- ◻ Incorporation of Digital Equity objectives into the Urban Business Growth Program agreement with UMKC Innovation Center
- ◻ Addition of an annual contract employee City Manager's Office in the position of Digital Equity Fellowship to facilitate the implementation of the Digital Equity Strategic Plan, recruit regional governments to participate in the activities of the Coalition for Digital Inclusion, expand public- and private-sector participation in the Digital Upcycling Program, continue the City's participation in national initiatives for Digital Equity, Lifeline, Net Neutrality and similar state and national initiatives, utilize Channel 2 to promote opportunities for the general public to participate in digital engagement volunteer opportunities
- ◻ Designate a representative of the City Manager to serve as the City's representative on the Kansas City Digital Inclusion Coalition

GENERAL

13. Adopt a resolution in support the Kansas City Coalition for Digital Inclusion's efforts to bridge the Digital Divide
14. Review programs of City departments and compile a list of programs supporting the goals of the Digital Equity Strategic Plan
15. Amend the Advance KC Scorecard to allocate additional points to projects that include free high-speed broadband connectivity, and commercial developments with a public wifi space that meet minimum bandwidth standards
16. Consider affordable digital connectivity in the City's 5-Year Consolidated Housing Plan and Housing Policy and neighborhood Plans
17. Direct the City Manager to annually review the Google Fiber Community Connections network utilization

FUNDING

18. Direct the City Manager and Neighborhoods and Housing Services staff to consider funding requests of organizations that provide digital connectivity, digital literacy or other digital literacy skills training to members of the public and consider an organization's provision of digital connectivity, digital literacy or other digital literacy skills as a factor when awarding CDBG
19. Dedicate a portion of the revenue for pole attachments to support local non-profits that offer digital literacy training, refurbish and/or provide low cost equipment, or build networks for low income residents of Kansas City, Missouri
20. Direct the City Manager to establish a Digital Equity Fund, the purpose of which is to provide annual leveraging allocations for funding to non-profit organizations whose primary mission is to provide digital connectivity, digital literacy, and other digital skills
21. Direct the City Manager to review and pursue other funding opportunities for Digital Equity

Appendices

<u>Appendix A: Additional Resources</u>

A.1: Kansas City, MO Digital Roadmap

A.2: Digital Scholars Program Description

A.3: Digital Upcycling Program Description

A.4: Kansas City Coalition for Digital Inclusion 2015 Summit Report

A.5: List of Google Fiber Community Connections

A.6: ConnectHome Final Report

Appendix B: Resolution No. _____

Resolution _____

Adopting a Digital Equity Strategic Plan to ensure all residents have equal access to the digital economy; and directing the City Manager to implement its six priorities.

WHEREAS, Digital Equity is a condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy and economy and is necessary for access to essential services, civic and cultural participation, lifelong learning, employment, entrepreneurship, and economic mobility; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, the City executed a development agreement with Google Fiber to deploy an experimental gigabit fiber to the home Internet service which included Google Fiber's commitment to serve economically distressed neighborhoods through the deployment of free Internet services to 300 schools, libraries, community centers and government buildings; and

WHEREAS, on September 20, 2011, Mayor Sylvester "Sly" James and Joe Reardon announced the Mayors Bistate Innovations Team Playbook and KC Digital Drive to highlight the importance of Digital Equity initiatives; and

WHEREAS, the Kansas City Coalition for Digital Inclusion, of which the City is a founding member, was established with the vision of ensuring every citizen and household in the Kansas City metropolitan area has computer equipment, access to the Internet and training; and

WHEREAS, according to the Google Fiber study "The State of Broadband Internet Access in Kansas City," published in June 2012, nearly one-quarter of Kansas Citians are not connected to the Internet at home and 70% of children in the Kansas City School District do not have Internet access at home; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, the City Council adopted the Digital Roadmap, which states Digital Equity is an issue of social equity and maximizing access to technology is a moral imperative in an increasingly digital age; and

WHEREAS, the Digital Roadmap charges the City with developing a citywide Digital Equity policy aimed at bridging Kansas City's Digital Divide and a comprehensive strategy to increase public access to free wifi and/or broadband; and

WHEREAS, since 2015, the City has been recognized as a Digital Equity leader and has initiated local, or has been selected to pilot numerous national, Digital Equity initiatives, including:

1. selection for the White House/HUD ConnectHome Initiative aimed at creating opportunities for Digital Equity for student residents of public housing,

2. selection for the White House ConnectAll Community Connectivity Initiative aimed at creating opportunities for Digital Equity for students of public school systems,

3. adoption of the Kansas City Community Health Improvement Plan which identifies a greater need for Internet access to increase public health outcomes, and

4. selection as a site for the inaugural national Net Inclusion Summit for Digital Equity; and

WHEREAS, the development and adoption of a City Digital Equity strategic Plan is included in the Planning, Zoning, and Economic Development section of the City's 2017-2022 Citywide Business Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Council recognizes that while significant strides have and are being made throughout the City, ongoing work is necessary to attain Digital Equity; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF KANSAS CITY:

Section 1. That the City Council hereby adopts the Digital Equity Strategic Plan.

Section 2. That the City Council directs the City Manager to implement the six priorities of the Digital Equity Strategic Plan.

Section 3. That the City Manager shall conduct a policy review on Digital Equity annually to ensure the Digital Equity Strategic Plan is reflective of changing digital technologies.