

**Subject:** FW: (A) 3 Recommendation/Comments on FCC strategic plan 2006-11 & (B) Testimony on local, state and federal convergence to Chicago City Council

August 3, 2005

To Timothy Peterson

Comments and Recommendations in regard FCC Strategic Plan 2006-2011

Based on involvement in "telecommunication in community development" matters since 1997 during the convening of a conference on this topic at Chicago State University in Far South Side Chicago, co-sponsored by community-education-business and public official partners of urban revitalization group CITY INNOVATION and by Ameritech Illinois in-process-of-deregulation, participation in community intervention in Ameritech-SBC merger 1998-99 to secure "community reinvestment" allocations for low income communities, and activities in Illinois General Assembly since 2000 in the enactment of the Eliminate the Digital Divide Law in low income rural and urban areas throughout Illinois (primary sponsor and champion Rep. Constance A. (Connie) Howard of Chicago, below in the form of Closing the Gap memos (#10 and #9 for 2005) are:

(A) 3 recommendations to and comments on Strategic Plan to clarify FCC processes on (1) local-state-Federal telecommunication data cooperation, (2) consultation with model local-state-regional consumer/community projects, and (3) building statewide broadband extension networks, and

(B) Testimony to Chicago City Council "Talking Tech" hearing on July 28 concerning the need for convergence in policies, processes, cooperation and joint awareness activities (Such as Digital Literacy Matters public awareness campaigns), which further illustrate the 3 recommendations to the FCC in clarifying its performance objectives in terms of formal (and measurable) involvement of local, state regional public, full range of telecommunication providers and consumer/community and regional planning parties, to exchange "best thinking" on many parallel evolving fields, and to undertake formal "agreements" or "network cooperation and consultation" processes. These are anchored in stable-yet-flexible statewide broadband extension networks similar to agricultural and manufacturing/mining extension networks which today include many nonprofit, public sector and business enterprise participants in their structures and annual conferences, such as the 6th Annual Telecommunication Conference (focusing on primarily rural economic development and telehealth applications) which will be hosted by the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign Extension's Laboratory for Community and Economic Development in Springfield, Illinois November 17, 2005 (all welcome).

Another example of the state broadband network approach is the planned Broaband Workshop by Illinois Commerce Commission in Springfield August 31, to coincide with the ICC issuance of an RFP for Rural Broadband Grants as a portion of financing of rural broadband infrastructure in formalas similar to those of such primarily-loan financing of Rural Utilities Services of U.S. Department of Agriculture. What we need is a combination of USDA, HUD and US Department of Commerce partnerships with states to coordinate broadband extension with other programs, including in formal planning grants for telecommunication as part of land use and transportation planning by multi-country regional planning bodies (appointed by local public officials and having a cross section of representation from public body, community, business and grant agency sectors).

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A. Three Recommendations and Comments on FCC Strategic Plan Goals and Processes

# MTAG

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**“Closing the Gap” Memo #10 August 4, 2005**

**BETTER DATA COOPERATION, CONSULTATION WITH  
STATE/LOCAL MODELS OF CONSUMER/COMMUNITY INVESTORS, AND  
ENCOURAGING STATE BROADBAND EXTENSION:  
COMMENTS ON FCC 5 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2006-2011**

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## **Background**

In order to make affordable and stable basic and broadband communication connections for all (100%) of Americans for daily access and engagement in digital society and participation in cost efficient and productive life supporting “safe and healthy community” local communication networks, FCC’s 5 year strategic plan should adopt a mission, goals and objectives to clearly articulate a practical common path to enable the United States to become a forefront electronic communication user and infrastructure community (e.g. in “top five in the world”), based on cooperation among consumer and community investment networks, communication providers and federal, state and local oversight bodies, anchored by open, diverse and flexible local communication origination and access planning, including with vibrant multi-year sustainability for public communication services for daily and emergency use.

In order to get as close to 100% connectivity as possible to carry out the basic mandate of “public convenience and necessity” in which the productivity of connection is highest for society

and in which the costs and burdens on government for non-connectivity are very high in terms of human life, liberty and tax burdens of reaching and serving non-connected parties, it is important to systematically consult with cross-section of stakeholders and community investors, and keep in view “all the lines – electrical, telephone, cable” and “all the connections” which are society’s nervous system links to homes and to other local places, as well as roaming “nodes.”

### **3 key goals and objectives to measure FCC performance**

Following are 3 goals and related objectives which will enable the Strategic Plan to articulate goals in terms understandable to average consumers, such as through public awareness campaigns like Digital Literacy Matters in Illinois to link with federal Firstgov.gov outreach, and to all providers, and public officials, including in communication oversight bodies, at Federal, state and local level, and position the United States to advance in discussions and negotiations with communication parties in other countries and in international institutions and networks.

An introduction might read: Communication technologies are moving from an analog to a digital world, as competition is increasing in the communications marketplace from a number of models including “cooperation and competition” models to support investment and productivity gains in basic service and broadband extension to residential, business and community enterprise and public health and safety networks. A digital world of voice, data and visual communication brings a convergence of services, and cooperation in public oversight is becoming a reality with needs for regular cooperation in gathering, sharing and understanding data and results to help in better decision making by consumers, providers and Federal, state and local oversight bodies, at the lowest total delivery and regulatory costs, and with highest productivity for all. 3 goals:

- 1. Develop Federal-state-local Better Data Cooperation Process. To build on current cooperative data collection and sharing to provide better data for Federal state and local communication oversight bodies, and for consumers and providers, to assist in predictable decisions to invest, buy, use and obtain basic and advanced services, including through improved availability of data from telecommunication nodes and local service areas,** including use of common data collection, automated telecommunication data management, surveys, integration with community research and regional planning databases, emergency service data coordination, and the use of local service assemblies to clarify strengths, needs and plans as elements for inclusion in administrative review record at all levels of oversight, and as a basis for providing model data for local investors, network providers and digital literacy efforts.
- 2. Develop regular state-local consumer cross-section consultation process. To regularly convene in person and virtual fora of consumer and community investment and community media parties with a cross-section of experience with local and state models and activities** concerning important topics and agenda items of the Commission to facilitate the development of the best thinking about the range of models or policies that might be facilitated or adopted, with leadership of state and regional consumer advisors to FCC committees.
- 3. Develop regular Federal-State Broadband Extension network. To regularly convene in person and virtual fora State and local broadband extension policy leaders, network facilitators/infrastructure providers, consumers/community investors and oversight bodies** to review important topics of the Commission concerning investment and competition in broadband extension to meet consumer and provider needs, and to help build a national network of state/local assisted networks, including networks providing local public safety and health communications, regional planning council networks involved with telecommunication as part of land use and transportation plans, and including plans for spectrum use and asset management.

IMPROVING LIVES BY INVESTING IN COMMUNITY ENTERPRISES AND  
MODELS OF COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

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Midwest Technology Access Group, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)3 Corporation

Pioneering and implementing investments in technology

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*Building a Midamerica Center for Modeling Community Infrastructure and Community Enterprise*

B. Testimony to Chicago City Council July 28, 2005 on Convergence and Cooperation in Policies and Processes by Local, State and Federal Oversight of Telecommunication

## **MTAG**

*Midwest Technology Access Group, Inc.*

*“Closing the Gap” memo #9 July 28, 2005...*

### **DAILY CONNECTIVITY IS IN OUR LAP IN CHICAGO!**

**LOCAL ACCESS PLANNING FOR TELECOMMUNICATION ACCESS AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE IN CITY OF CHICAGO BASED ON ANNUAL PLANS IN TELECOM  
CENTRAL OFFICE AREAS (OF 60-250,000 RESIDENTS) AND CONVERGENCE WITH STATE  
AND FEDERAL COOPERATION**

**Testimony presented to City of Chicago Public Hearing**

**On Wireless Chicago Planning by City Council Committees**

**On Finance and Economic, Capital and Technology Development**

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## **Background on Telecommunication Planning as part of Land Use, Transportation and Quality of Life Planning – Digital Literacy and Telecommunication Access Matter**

Midwest Technology Access Group, Inc. is a nonprofit organization dedicated to pioneering and implementing technologies to improve the quality of lives and communities. During the period beginning September 2001, MTAG has been the administrative agent of Illinois Community Technology Consortium, which has developed professional and policy development activities to assist public access Human Services Computer Labs in low income areas in all 10 Economic Development regions of Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. This has involved working with a dozen grassroots, human services and university service extension projects in Northern, Central and Southern Illinois to administer a 3 year grant of \$1.3 million from Illinois Community Technology Fund created by Illinois Commerce Commission in 2000, and matched by \$2.7 million in local, state and Federal matching funds and contributions. Included in this activity was assistance provided by MTAG to Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission in selecting 7 community mapping and planning groups (including 6 in the City of Chicago) under its national demonstration Full Circle “digital tool” community economic development multi-year project under support of Technology Opportunities Program of U.S. Department of Commerce.

In activities going back to 1997, MTAG parties (1) helped organize major conference on Telecommunication and Community Development at Chicago State University, (2) worked to extend the 10 ward North Side NEST project for telecommunication as part of wider economic development in City of Chicago to south and west sides, (3) proposed to Department of (then) Planning and Economic Development that community development groups and CDBG recipients be charged with developing local access plans for telecommunication infrastructure based on local telephone central office areas, often around 50-60,000 residents, (4) participated in a number of activities in Civic Net planning, including proposals for modular involvement of community and business enterprise linkages to affordable fiber-based broadband, and has made recommendations, (6) worked with members of Mayor’s Council of Technology Advisors especially Digital Divide committee to integrated digital literacy with overall affordability and access planning. In the past year, as part of statewide efforts to Get Illinois Online, MTAG has worked with NIPC, Illinois Association of Regional Councils to secure legislative and administrative responsibilities to integrate “telecommunication infrastructure and service” planning with “land use, environmental and transportation planning,” including for the purposes of coordinated statewide “broadband extension” through convergent modes of

Recently, MTAG has assisted in administrative development of linking of “digital literacy” and “housing” initiatives for ex-offenders in a project of Westside Job and Information Skill Network, to be developed by HICA, Inc. of North Lawndale and West Garfield Park in partnership with IT Skill Training and Digital Tool enterprises. See attached description Document Assistance Services approach, which needs Internet-connected facilities in many community public access (no cost or low cost) locations, public and private, in congregations and Human Service Computer Labs and through Community Information Kiosks under digital government and consumer services Information ATM Card Networks.

**Help Needed: Cooperative Local-Statewide-National to Provide Very Low Cost Broadband Internet Access to All, including Frugal Consumers and Near Phoneless Consumers for Digital Literacy and Economic Competitiveness of City of Chicago in World Economy.**

Following are practical steps, which when taken together, add up to investment in Broadband Extension for All as Chicago seeks to compete with telecommunication infrastructures of major developed cities like

Soeul, Singapore, Los Angeles, New York, and Houston.

Local Steps:

1. Adopt Digital Literacy Matters resolution of Chicago City Council, including cooperation with statewide outreach public awareness campaign being developed by State of Illinois and linking with Federal digital government initiatives like recent television PSA's for FirstGov.Gov access by average residents to important information and public benefits, including an Annual Digital Literacy Matters Day celebrated by the Mayor, City Council and community and business organizations.
2. Provide that Department of Planning and other City Departments provide funding for Local Access Plans (LAPs) for "telecommunication in economic development mapping and implementation" and "telecommunication in human services connections like 911, 311 and new public-private 211" systems, to local community development organizations in all areas of Chicago, and with linking with wireline-based central office areas.
3. Support public, business and foundation-supported initiatives of Convergent Telecommunication Service Quality Assemblies, in areas of 60-250,000 to provide Community Forums on quality of current and planned wireline, fiber, cable, electric line, land-based and satellite-based wireless and Voice over Internet voice, data and video services from 1.5 to 50 and 100 megabits per second, which is the standard for most homes, enterprises and public facilities within 5 years.
4. Work with City agencies and private parties like Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce to create a Quarterly Gathering or Open Forum of leaders of business, community, public agency, learning institutions, to strengthen diverse networks to work together such as in hosting International IBIO conference in April 2006 and the biannual International Manufacturing Technology Show (largest trade show in Chicago) and its Student Summit on IT-related Career and Apprenctice Opportunities in September 2006.

State Steps:

1. Publicize the availability of Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's Eliminate the Digital Divide small grants to support demonstration instruction, equipment and training of public access Human Services Computer Labs in community centers, libraries, afterschool and congregational settings in low income areas of Chicago, including the planned Request for Applications in September 2005, and Digital Literacy and Electronic Product Recycling initiatives of many state agencies and Literacy Programs of Secretary of State as head librarian for Illinois.
2. Participate in Illinois Commerce Commission activities to design and implement Convergent Telecommunication strategies and policies for cooperation among local, statewide and federal agencies for cooperative oversight and increased and integrated cooperation in data sharing for planning and service quality improvement purposes.
3. Support efforts like Get Illinois Online and E-Champion proposals of Governor's Broadband Task Force to link local Wireless, Wireline, Cable and Other Technologies within a framework of competition among all public and private enterprises, including university and hospital and electrical systems which have dedicated major technology missions to serve residents, businesses, research,

education and library systems.

4. Work with state legislature committees with responsibility for Telecom Rewrite of 2007 to insure appropriate and nationally integrated standards and financial support for all telecommunication connections with 911, 411, 311 and new 211 human services (public and private providers) now in developmental stages in cooperation between Illinois Department of Human Services.

5. Work with state agencies with responsibilities for community integration and support of ex-offenders from state and federal correctional facilities, with a focus on funding of Document Access Services and IT Boot Camp both before and after release into the community, and in connection with special workforce programs of Mayors Office of Workforce Development.

6. Work with state agencies involved in youth, family and senior services to ensure they have access to Digital Tools, Internet Access at home, at work, at learning institutions and public settings, including programs of University of Illinois and other public and private university extension programs, which work on Information Skills as part of safe and healthy communities.

#### Federal and National Steps

1. Support bipartisan Members of Illinois Congressional Delegation working to extend broadband by convergent modes in rural, urban and suburban areas, promote digital literacy and affordable access by all with special telecommunication reinvestments in lower income communities, as part of expected revision of federal Telecommunication Act of 1996, including continuing of urban institution support by E Rate and other funding, using outcome tracking and data sharing measurements for schools, libraries, hospitals and other public access outlets.
2. Plan for City of Chicago digital government and resident access to website services, linked with outreach activities such as FirstGov.Gov for basic safe and healthy community and benefit information.
3. Work with major universities and enterprises to establish a Midamerica Regional Center for Modeling Community Infrastructure to pioneer and train Chicago and urban infrastructure pioneers in leading edge community design, modeling and virtual infrastructure products and services, proved in improving quality of life in Chicago, and with worldwide markets.
4. Invite Tom Friedman, best selling author of *The World is Flat*, involving 10 reinforcing Internet and globalization revolutions in the 15 years since the fall of Berlin Wall, to a special event in the City of Chicago to talk about how public, business and community institutions, individuals, parents and families can work together to expand Chicago as Internet Crossroads and Content Catalog Center (similar to Sears & Wards catalogs of 100 years ago) of the World, complete with Digital Literacy skills by all.

IMPROVING LIVES BY CONNECTING ALL ILLINOISANS

TO BASIC AND ADVANCED TELECOMMUNICATIONS

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***Administrator of Illinois Community Technology Consortium: A Five-Circuit path to a better quality of life.***