

## **Other significant features of our community that are relevant for this project:**

The South Bend, Mishawaka and St. Joseph County area is the ideal location for Google to conduct its fiber experiment. Here, Google will be able to reach a variety of consumers more quickly and at lower cost than in other locations.

We have rich demographic, cultural and economic diversity in a relatively compact area. Climate and terrain are varied but not extreme. We have St. Joe Valley Metronet, a network of more than 50 miles of carrier-grade, vendor-neutral dark fiber already in place. We have right of way access agreements in place that allow expansion of the network and we have already defeated challenges by CLECs.

Our diversity can provide an excellent opportunity for Google to understand the impact of Internet speeds 100 times faster than what is available today while the combination of existing infrastructure and agreements, low construction costs and low cost of living create a relatively inexpensive opportunity to extend fiber to the home.

Our geology makes the area attractive. We have a relatively flat terrain. Installing conduit with directional boring equipment is relatively easy and inexpensive because of the absence of rock and sand. The ground is a composite of clay and soil. Boring costs in other areas of the country can be twice as expensive as they are in South Bend, Mishawaka and St. Joseph County.

Educational attainment ranges from 9th grade through post graduate degrees. Employment by sector in manufacturing, technical, service and other jobs mirrors national statistics. Neighborhoods in South Bend itself reflect all ranges of income. The cities also are racially and culturally diverse.

We are typical of the manufacturing Midwest. Our economy is in transition as manufacturing jobs have moved to other areas and overseas. Those changes mean our cost of living is relatively low: 79.4 on a national index where 100 is average. While that lower cost of living means it will be relatively less expensive for Google to locate and do business here, it also means the region needs the recognition and energy that will come from being selected as Google's test community.

We have several initiatives under way to help remake our economy and create technical and knowledge businesses and jobs. But lack of connectivity has slowed development of residents, businesses and



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institutions. A few years ago, businesses here were paying four times as much as businesses in Chicago, just 100 miles away, for the same level of broadband service from the same providers. We launched St. Joe Valley Metronet, a public-private partnership, to break the connectivity stranglehold providers held on our area.

The Metronet has overcome challenges by the communications industry that have stopped or restricted metropolitan networks in other areas. We now have more than 50 miles of carrier-neutral dark fiber. Our investment of more than \$7 million in this network has created a platform Google may use to reach more homes at less cost. The Metronet assesses no bandwidth fees or per-mile charges.

The Metronet already has right of way agreements with South Bend, Mishawaka and St. Joseph County that allow expansion of the network and access to in-ground conduit to house the fiber.



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## **Current or planned programs in our community to accelerate and expand adoption and use of broadband Internet access:**

St. Joe Valley Metronet is the backbone for expansion of broadband access in South Bend, Mishawaka and St. Joseph County. With Google as a partner, the greater speeds and lower costs Metronet has brought to business, government and institutional partners can be brought to residential users.

Right of way agreements already are in place to expand this carrier-neutral dark fiber network that covers more than 50 miles, and the Metronet has overcome challenges from existing carriers.

The Metronet and its partners are engaged in initiatives to expand service to areas already served by the network. Among them are:

- **Socially Responsible Computing Initiative.** The SRCI makes use of the unlimited capacity, no bandwidth fees and no per-mile charges to connect nonprofit organizations through shared circuits. They then can use central IP telephone systems, internet service and data storage and backup services to reduce expenses and direct more money to client services.
- **St. Joe Valley Metronet Service Vendor Program.** Realizing that the Metronet would have more value for its clients if they knew what more they could do with high-speed bandwidth, it launched the Service Vendor Outreach Initiative in 2009. Using the Metronet Web site, over 30 vendors promote the added value and services they can bring to Metronet subscribers, such as data backup and storage, disaster recovery, telephone and voice systems, lit fiber, web design and development, web hosting and wireless services.
- **Michiana Free-Net** was the first nonprofit provider of Internet service and web hosting in Indiana.



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## **Additional reasons why we believe that Google should select our community for this project:**

Google's RFI asks us to imagine sitting in a rural health clinic and connecting in real-time with specialists in New York. In South Bend, Mishawaka and St. Joseph County, we're already doing something similar. The Michiana Health Information Network is a pioneer in real-time sharing of medical records and patient information. That is one of the creative innovations that access to high-speed broadband has made possible.

We are expanding broadband access through St. Joe Valley Metronet, a vendor-neutral, carrier-grade metropolitan network that very much matches the model Google is proposing in its fiber to the home initiative.

The Metronet is the result of a public-private partnership that was formed when it was realized that lack of broadband access was limiting economic development. With more than 50 miles of dark fiber in place, no broadband fees and no per mile charges, the Metronet also has right of way agreements that allow immediate expansion and it has overcome challenges by existing carriers who tried to stop competition.

Google wonders what next generation apps may arise when homes have affordable access to high-speed broadband. We have seen some results in economic development and in innovation made possible in part by our innovative fiber network.

Some examples include:

- Innovation Park at Notre Dame. IPND is an incubator linking researchers at the University of Notre Dame with business developers, a place where new technology and research-based businesses can be launched and supported with necessary services.
- The Midwest Institute for Nanoelectronics Discovery. MIND, supported by the semiconductor industry and involving a number of university partners, is located at Notre Dame. Its research objective is to discover the replacement for CMOS-based microchips so computer and electronics innovation can continue .
- CSONet. Sensors in sewer lines linked to high-speed networks can prevent overflow and limit pollution.



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- South Bend Park greenhouses. Access to the Metronet allows Notre Dame to place servers in South Bend park department greenhouses. Heat generated by the computers helps heat the facilities,. Notre Dame saves on cooling costs and the city saves on heating expenses.
- Notre Dame Center for Research Computing and Wireless Institute, both advancing technology and how users interface with technology.
- The Socially Responsible Computing Initiative.

We're proud of the success of St. Joe Valley Metronet. It has stimulated development, growth and innovation in the business and institutional sectors it touches and will only continue to do more. We also know that a community can't be successful if technology serves only business and leaves the population behind. While we have built an excellent platform that will help Google begin its initiative quickly and at lowest cost, we need Google's help in extending the benefits and the potential to everyone.



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## **Additional comments we would like to make to Google on behalf of our community:**

Our community has the infrastructure to permit Google to deploy its fiber to the home initiative more quickly and at less expense. Partnering with St. Joe Valley Metronet would give Google access to more than 50 miles of carrier-grade, vendor-neutral dark fiber already in place

Just as important, the Metronet already has right of way agreements allowing access for expansion of the network. And the public-private partnership that created Metronet took on the challenges from existing carriers and providers and won. Those are two hurdles -- access and legal challenges -- Google won't have to overcome here.

The Metronet was created after community leaders realized that economic development here was being strangled by high cost and limited access to broadband. Users here were paying four times as much as users in Chicago for the same level of service from the same providers.

Businesses, medical centers, educational institutions and governmental organizations have taken advantage of Metronet, which assesses no bandwidth or per-mile charges, to grow, to better compete, to create and to innovate.

The initial premise that better access to broadband would promote economic development has been proven. Extending better access to homes is essential to revitalizing the economies of South Bend, Mishawaka and St. Joseph County. We need Google's help to take this next step. In turn, our existing infrastructure and agreements will help Google execute its fiber to the home initiative more quickly, more easily and at less cost.



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