EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

The County of Hudson received one of the State of New Jersey's Cyber District grants in 2001. As typically conceived, a Cyber District is an industrial tract enhanced with digital broadband network infrastructure as a tactic for attracting high-wage, high value-added firms to the tract.

Based on the continuing evolution of cyber concepts, and reflecting limited benefits from the application of that concept elsewhere, a strategy was developed that effectively treats the entire County as a Cyber District. This is referred to as a *Cyber Strategy* in the various documents.

Products

The study produced an extensive technical appendix and three policy reports. They are:

Briefing Book – A framework for thinking about Cyber Strategy, illustrated by examples from the global economy.

Cyber-Profile - A survey of Hudson County's readiness to effectively apply available digital technologies to economic development. The survey included conditions such as the existing telecommunications network, the cyber capabilities of the various government and educational institutions, demographics, real estate trends, structure of the built environment, and existing economic development initiatives.

Cyber-Strategy - Recommendations that cross organizational and political boundaries to create a *culture of innovation* in the County that integrates digital networks into existing businesses, workforce training, government services and land use.

Findings

The network infrastructure in the County was found to be one of the best of any metropolitan area in the world. In fact, one of the competitive advantages of Hudson County is its access to an extraordinary broadband network infrastructure.

The County has an array of needs that could be addressed through comprehensive use of the network infrastructure. These needs include: improving the skills of a large multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and education deficient workforce; reducing street congestion which, as noted in the 1999 Strategic Plan, is negatively impacting the County's global competitiveness; integrating a fragmented service delivery system, from government services to workforce training; improving assistance to small and emerging businesses to remain competitive and; altering the negative perceptions relating to quality of life in portions of the County.

Hudson County has the resources upon which to base a Cyber Strategy. These include an array of institutions currently in the process of strategically deploying digital technologies, and a number of new and continuing technology projects. These projects include Hudson Community College's technology centers and distance education programs, the Technology Academy's experience with video conferencing, the One-Stop Center operated by the Workforce Investment Board, the technical resources of Stevens Institute of Technology, and of course the County's infrastructure of broadband networks.

Recommendations

The Cyber Strategy consists of three initiatives that together will link the use of digital networks to economic development throughout the County, and especially in those areas that have historically been left behind, or are having a difficult time making the transition from the industrial economy to the digital economy.

The *Network Neighborhood Initiative* will add communications and computer capabilities to commercial, civic, and industrial centers throughout the County. These designated *digital centers* will become *network neighborhoods* by utilizing a *network station* (analogous to a train station) to create *virtual* access to the goods, services, and economic opportunities needed by the residents of each neighborhood. In some cases the Network Station will consist of Internet enabled kiosks. In others it could take the form of a 20,000 square foot facility with suites for electronic meetings, telemedicine, distance education and e-government. Six projects have been defined to implement this Initiative. The 'Digital Centers Plan' is the highest priority project as it will identify the key locations for immediate cyber development.

The *Network Enterprise Initiative* will improve the abilities of Hudson County organizations to effectively use digital networks so that businesses become more agile in relation to changing market conditions, more competitive in the global economy and so that public institutions improve customer service while containing costs. Five projects have been defined to implement this Initiative. The "Electronic Meetings Project" has the highest priority because of its relatively low cost and short-term benefits.

The *Cyber Strategy Coordination Initiative* will provide the guidance to the initiatives above and coordinate the resulting projects as they are planned and implemented.

The Cyber Strategy document includes scenarios for the cyber development of Journal Square, a Network Neighborhood, and a Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Station. It also includes a four-year Action Plan for implementing the Cyber Strategy.