

BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Nebraska Public)
Service Commission, on its Own)
Motion, to Administer the Nebraska)
Universal Service Fund Broadband)
Program.)

APPLICATION NO. NUSF-92. _____

COPY

**PETITION OF COX NEBRASKA TELCOM, L.L.C. REQUESTING
SUPPORT FROM THE NEBRASKA UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND FOR A
PROJECT TO INCREASE BROADBAND ADOPTION IN OMAHA**

I. Introduction

Cox Nebraska Telcom, L.L.C. (“Cox”) by and through its counsel hereby submits this Petition to the Nebraska Public Service Commission (“Commission”) seeking support to fund a project that will bring broadband service to low-income students and families in Omaha, Nebraska. This Petition is being submitted pursuant to NUSF-92, P.O. 5 entered on October 27, 2015.

II. Supportive Information

1. ASSOCIATED ENTITIES

The entities associated with this Petition are Cox Nebraska Telcom, LLC (“Cox”) and Omaha Public Schools (“OPS”). The contact person for the Petition is:

Rob Logsdon
Cox Nebraska Telcom, LLC
11505 W. Dodge Road
Omaha, NE 68514
(402) 934-0306
rob.logsdon@cox.com



2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT AND BUDGET

General Project Description

Cox seeks support from the Nebraska Universal Fund Broadband Program (“NEBP”) to bring broadband service to low-income students and families in Omaha. Specifically, this application seeks funding to modify a bus to create a Wi-Fi enabled vehicle that will bring free broadband and devices to neighborhoods in north Omaha, similar to the operation of a traditional library ‘bookmobile’ bringing books to neighborhoods. Preliminary drawings are attached hereto to illustrate the bus design. These drawings are marked as *Exhibit 1*.

This revolutionary project will bring free broadband to students in highly-impooverished neighborhoods in north Omaha, specifically to the Wakonda and Kennedy Elementary School districts in OPS. The Wakonda and Kennedy students reside in some of the lowest-income neighborhoods in Nebraska and the United States, and access to broadband in students’ homes is highly unlikely.

Broadband speeds at a minimum of 4 Mbps on the downlink and 1 Mbps on the uplink will be provided, although higher speeds are anticipated through the LTE technology. OPS will provide learning opportunities for students on the bus and will schedule after school activities using Common Sense Media for students and their parents. Safe parking locations for the bus would be determined in consultation with the Omaha Police Department (“OPD”) and regular patrolling of the bus would be coordinated with the OPD. The schedule of the bus’s location and route would be widely promoted by the Wakonda and Kennedy schools.

Location and Site Rationale

The Kennedy and Wakonda Elementary School neighborhoods are targeted to receive the broadband bus service, as both are “Turnaround” schools for OPS. This federal designation is given to the lowest-performing schools in the nation. It means extra efforts are being made to support the schools, not only financially, but through the hiring of new and additional staff members, implementing longer school days, increased professional development, etc.

The Microsoft Corporation has awarded grants to the Kennedy and Wakonda Elementary Schools to provide electronic notebooks and next generation technology solutions, such as Hololens to students. It is hoped that the notebooks will help create comparable learning opportunities for students to close the achievement gap that presently exists at these schools compared to other Nebraska elementary schools. However, the mere distribution of the notebooks is not a solution. The notebooks combined with consistent, high-quality instruction, extended school days, daily classroom intervention blocks and regular communication with parents, hope to bring increased student performance.

The students’ electronic notebooks will enhance teachers’ capacity to deliver instruction, check for understanding, and provide corrective and/or enrichment activities for individual students. And, due to the notebooks, Kennedy and Wakonda students will shift to taking state assessments exclusively online, and will have better resources to complete classroom tests and homework. The notebooks will enhance students’ overall educational experiences and enrich school curriculum.

Unfortunately, a significant obstacle for students at Kennedy and Wakonda is their inability to use their notebooks after school due to a lack of Internet access at home. Therefore, even though students have been equipped with the devices that are enjoyed by their peers in more affluent neighborhoods, their lack of broadband access at home limits the usefulness and utility of the hardware they have been given.

Demonstration of Need for NEBP Assistance

Wakonda Elementary is one of Nebraska's lowest-performing schools. The school, located in north Omaha at 4845 Curtis Avenue, has an enrollment of approximately 400. Nearly 90% of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Wakonda has more special education and mobile students than the state and OPS average, although daily attendance remains high, at almost 97%. During the 2014-15 school year, 37% of Wakonda students scored proficient on state math tests and 46% scored proficient on state reading tests, compared to the state average of 80% and 72% respectively. While these scores are low, Wakonda is trending in the right direction. The 2014-15 test scores brought a 14.8% improvement in math and almost a 12% improvement in reading over the previous year. It is hoped that making broadband available outside school hours can increase students' test scores further.

Kennedy Elementary has also made gains in achievement on standardized tests, but it still ranks among the lowest-performing tier of schools. Kennedy has approximately 300 students. The school is located in north Omaha at 2906 North 30th Street, and has some of the highest need students, with nearly the entire school, 97% qualifying for free or reduced lunch. During the 2014-15 school year, nearly 32% of Kennedy students scored proficient on state math tests and 49% on state

reading tests, compared to the state average of 72% and 80% respectively. However, like Wakonda, Kennedy is trending in the right direction with math and reading scores increasing approximately 12% from the previous year.

Per a report from the website Neighborhoodscout.com, the area to be served by the broadband bus has an average per capita income lower than 99.2% of the neighborhoods in the United States. Also, 91.2% of the children in this area live in poverty, an extraordinarily high percentage

Budget

A budget identifying the costs to create the broadband bus is attached hereto as *Exhibit 2*. This exhibit is confidential. Although a financial match is not required, Cox will reduce the price to install the equipment on the bus and Cox will discount the services provided to the bus. In addition, OPS will cover some costs associated with this project. These costs include providing the bus itself for conversion, fuel, maintenance, insurance, licensure and taxes. OPS will also pay the salaries and benefits for the teachers who will be on the bus (Instructional Technology Trainer and/or a Digital Citizenship Trainer), and the costs of the bus driver. OPS will pay for the LTE service that will provide Internet service to bus and the costs to maintain the technology on the bus. In summary, the costs requested from the NEBP are the one-time, upfront costs necessary to construct the broadband bus. OPS will pay the going-forward expenses to make and keep the bus operational.

3. ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER OF USERS

The broadband bus would provide broadband to all students at Wakonda and Kennedy Elementary Schools outside schools hours, or 708 students. In addition,

family members who accompany their child to the bus will benefit. The number of users could easily exceed 1000 unique persons. If the project is successful and a schedule can be implemented, OPS will consider adding additional north Omaha neighborhoods and other schools to the bus route. However, at the onset, the focus of the bus service will be to assist the neediest elementary students, those being from Wakonda and Kennedy. A map of the targeted neighborhoods is attached hereto as *Exhibit 3*. It is important to note that all of these users will likely be ‘new’ in that they do not have access to broadband at home or have the ability to travel to locations that have free broadband service.

4. DEPLOYMENT SCHEDULE

Since the broadband bus is a first of its kind project for OPS, the amount of time required to outfit the bus and launch the service is uncertain. However, the petitioners commit to making the bus operational as soon as possible. The goal is to have the bus operational and serving students during the 2016-17 school year.

5. SERVICE COMMITMENT

Cox commits to offering service, in partnership with OPS on the broadband bus for at least five (5) years.

6. FINANCIAL QUALIFICATIONS

Cox Communications, the parent of Cox is a financially solid company, capable of providing the broadband services described herein and meeting all service-related commitments. OPS is Nebraska’s largest school district, serving over 50,000 students

from kindergarten through high school. OPS' annual budget exceeds \$500 million.

Both Cox and OPS are committed to making this project a success.

7. FINANCIAL, TECHNICAL AND MANAGERIAL COMPETENCY

Cox was one of the first companies to obtain a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to operate as a competitive local exchange carrier ("CLEC") in Nebraska.

Cox's CLEC authority was granted by the Commission in C-1359 on December 10,

1996. Cox was later designated an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier allowing

Cox to participate in the Nebraska Telecommunications Assistance Program via

Commission Order in C-1693 on March 10, 1998. Cox has successfully operated in

the Omaha area offering telephone, as well cable television and Internet services to

residential and business customers for decades.

8. TRUTH AND ACCURACY AFFIDAVIT

A Truth and Accuracy Affidavit related to the information contained in this Petition is attached hereto as *Exhibit 4*.

III. Further Commitments

In further support of this Petition, Cox states:

1. Cox commits to use support only for the purposes described herein and which have been approved by the Commission;
2. Cox commits to fulfill all reporting and audit requirements by the Commission related to this Petition; and
3. Cox commits to abide by all applicable Commission rules, regulations and orders.

IV. Conclusion

A broadband bus will significantly improve the ability for students from the Wakonda and Kennedy Elementary Schools to access the Internet and better utilize the electronic notebooks they have been given by Microsoft. As indicated above, broadband is rarely subscribed to in the households of the Wakonda and Kennedy Elementary neighborhoods due to the cost. And getting to locations that have free broadband is often not possible for elementary students due to transportation barriers and safety concerns with walking in north Omaha. If this Petition is granted, OPS and Cox will bring free broadband and devices to low-income students, truly eliminating the obstacles related to income, transportation and distance. This is an innovative way to bring quality content and broadband access to students. This Petition meets the criteria and objectives of the broadband adoption program, and it furthers the goal of deploying broadband service to all Nebraskans. Cox respectfully requests the Commission enter an Order approving this Petition.

Respectfully submitted this 23rd day of February, 2016.

Cox Nebraska Telcom, L.L.C.

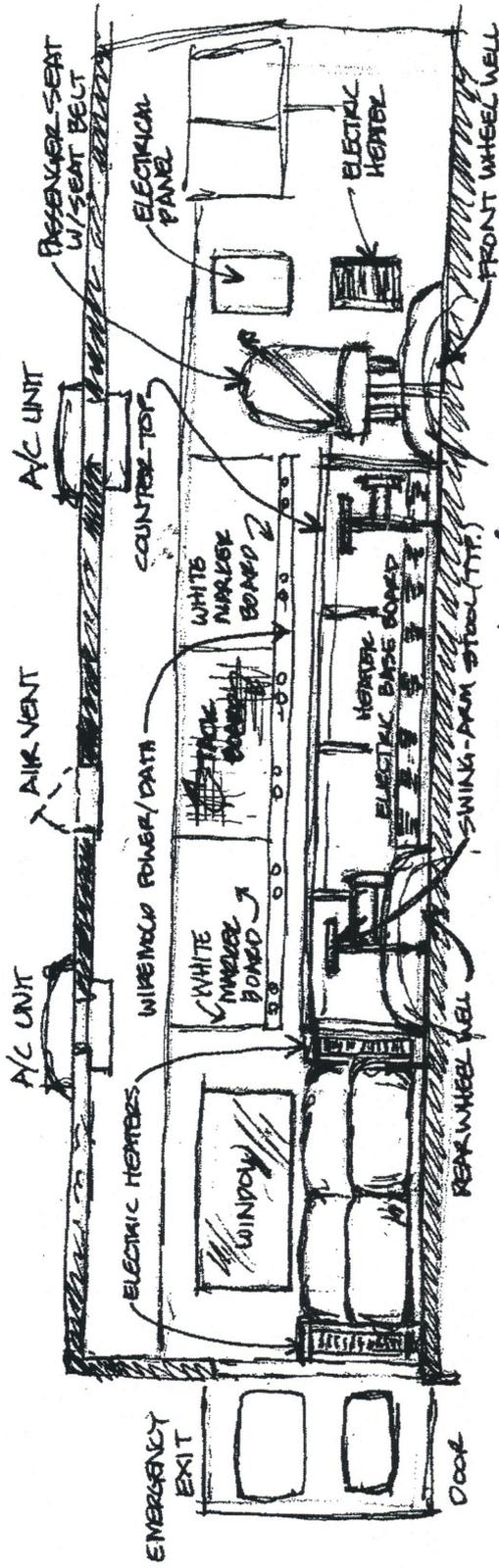
By:



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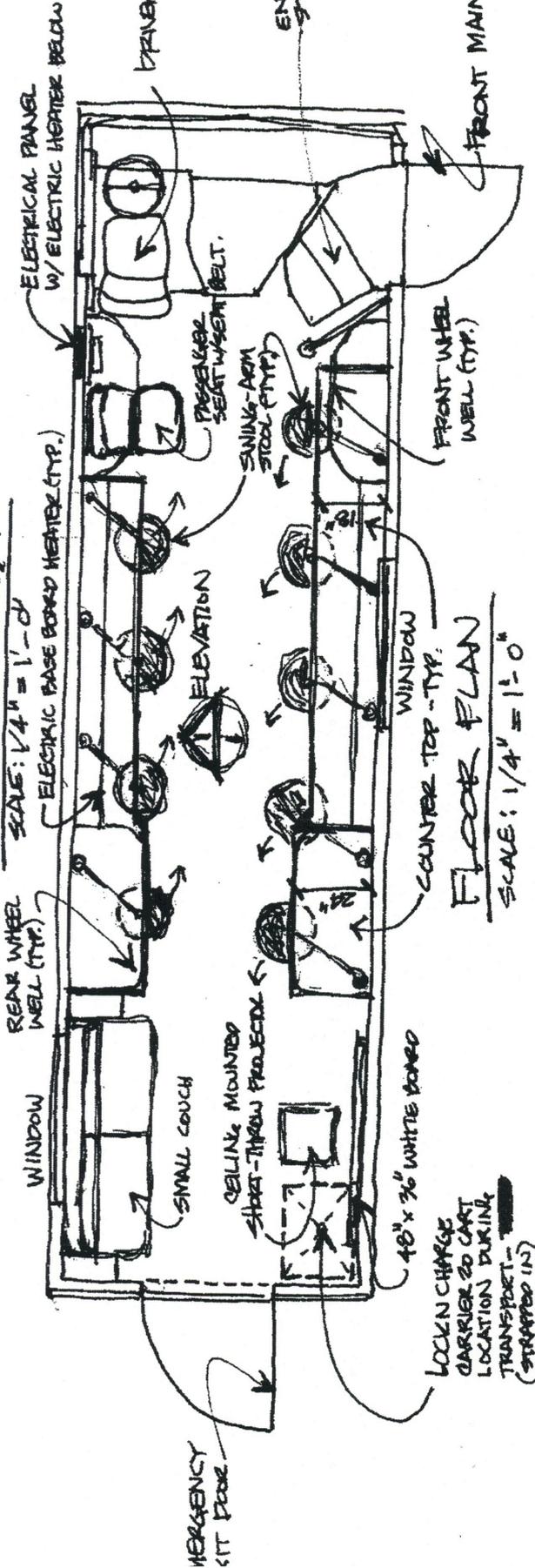
WI-FI Mobile Learning Unit

2016 01 08 CSE



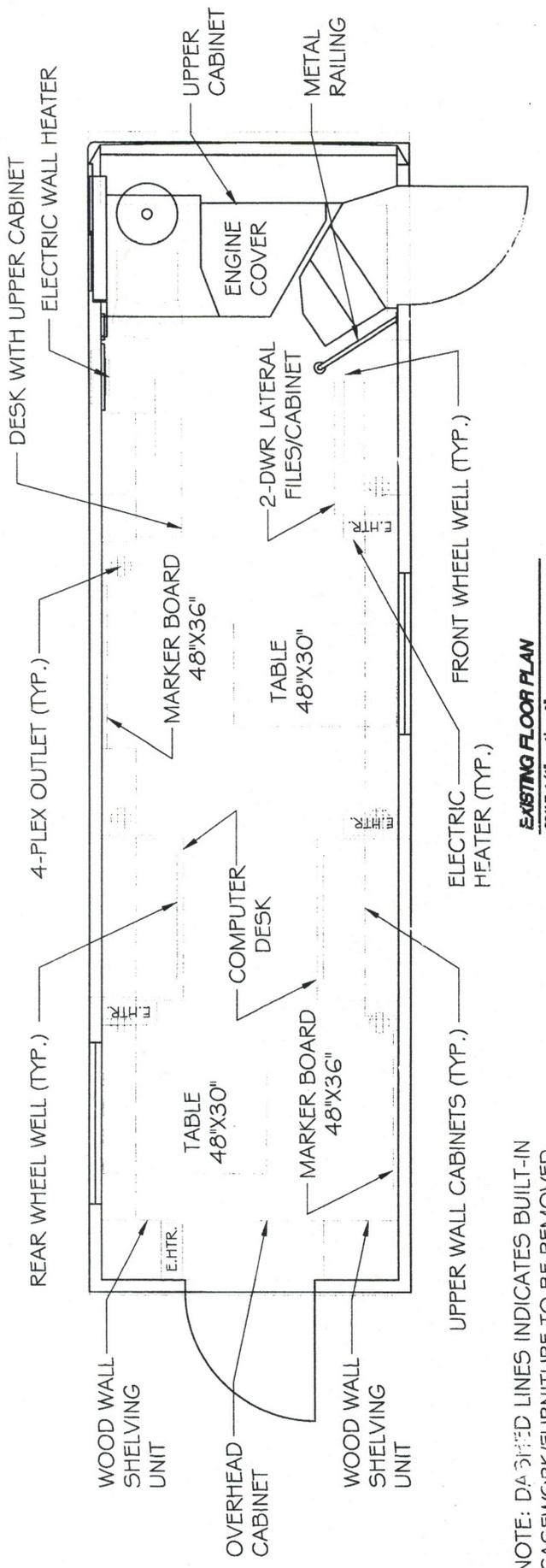
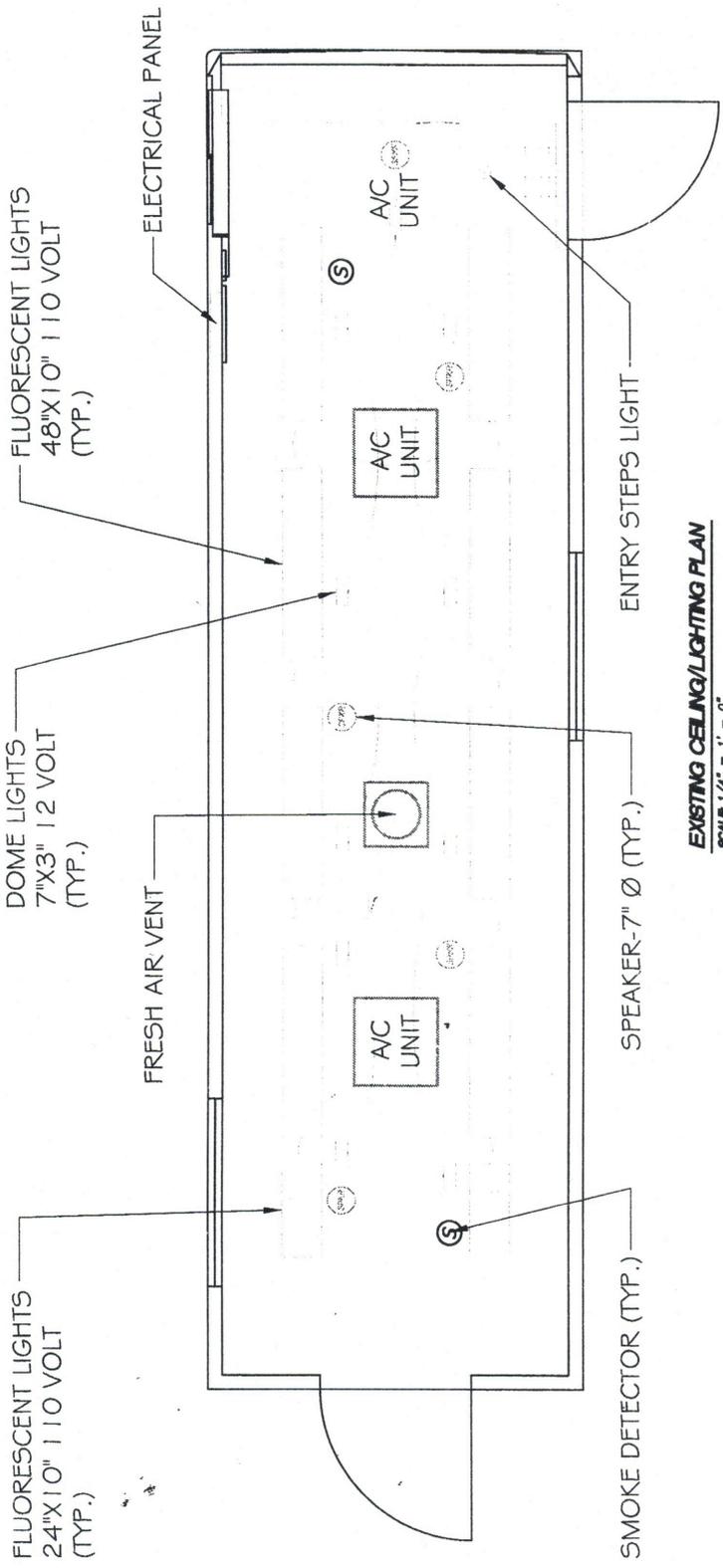
ELEVATION 1/1

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

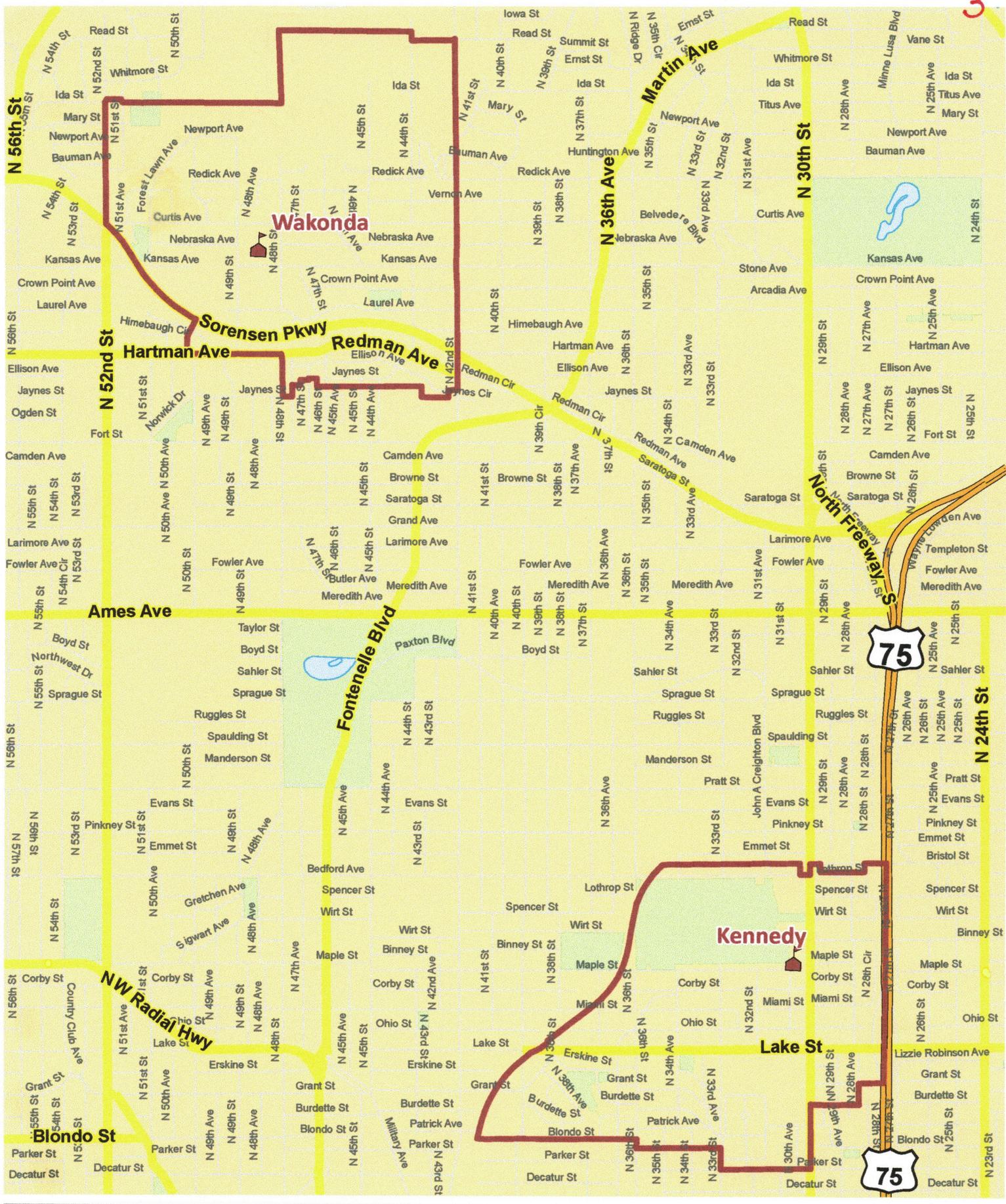


NOTE: DASHED LINES INDICATES BUILT-IN CASEWORK/FURNITURE TO BE REMOVED.

EXHIBIT 2 - CONFIDENTIAL

Budget - Redacted

Kennedy & Wakonda Elementary Home Attendance Area: 2015-16



Elementary School	Interstate/Freeway	Water
Home Attendance Area	Major Streets	Parks
	Other Streets	School District

Created by OPS Division of Research 2016
 Disclaimer: School placement confirmation can only be officially confirmed through the Student Placement Office at 402-557-2710.

AFFIDAVIT OF COX NEBRASKA TELCOM, L.L.C.

Nebraska Broadband Program

NUSF-92

STATE OF NEBRASKA)
)
COUNTY OF DOUGLAS) ss.

I, the undersigned, being duly sworn, state as follows:

- 1. I am the Director of Regulatory Affairs for Cox Nebraska Telcom, L.L.C.
2. I have read the foregoing Petition seeking funding from the Nebraska Broadband Program and state the information provided herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

Robert R. Logsdon
Robert R. Logsdon

Subscribed and sworn to before me

this 8 day of February, 2016.

Jean Ladenburger, Notary Public

Douglas County, Nebraska

My Commission Expires 6/2/2016

