2022 marked the 20th anniversary of the Cortex Innovation Community. Along with my fellow board members and the Cortex management team, we have the privilege and responsibility of building on two decades of success developing one of the world’s premier innovation districts.

The pandemic made it abundantly clear that progress is not linear. These recent years have given us an understanding that we must continually evolve to best help address today’s challenges. Thus, we are tasked with ensuring we have an innovation community that is efficient, inclusive and resilient. With that in mind, we completed a five-year strategic plan focused on not just growing the regional economic pie but focused on growth that more proactively includes and benefits all residents in the St. Louis region.

We are proud of the many successes that Cortex had in 2022 and the prior two decades, thanks in part to outstanding partnerships. We look forward to working collaboratively with others as we embrace the challenges and opportunities in the years ahead.

With the waning of the pandemic, 2022 served as a year of transition from a hunkering down mentality, to reigniting our efforts to accelerate inclusive economic growth in our city and region. We celebrated several wins in the District including:

► The opening of a major research center for San Francisco-based biotech firm Vir Biotechnology
► The expansion of home-grown cancer-therapy startup Wugen Biotechnology
► The graduation of the first class of a diversity of cybersecurity talent in partnership with Per Scholas

In 2022, we commemorated the launch of the Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient Innovation Center, which gained national attention as a way to combat shortages in the U.S. drug supply through collaboration-based innovation.

We were able to achieve these successes because we are, and will remain, focused on what we are uniquely suited to do, always tapping into our partnerships, and fully leveraging our power to convene.
Cortex is a vibrant innovation district serving as an inclusive economic engine for St. Louis. We create equitable economic impacts by leveraging high-quality facilities, developing programs that build knowledge and networks, and convening strategic partnerships that attract and support emerging and established companies. The work we do within our 200 acres strengthens our entire region. **We are here to make an impact.**

**OUR TARGET OUTCOME**

Foster an inclusive innovation economy in St. Louis

**UNIQUE STRENGTHS**

- Recognizable place
- Power to convene
- Experienced regional partner

**OUR WORK**

- Build out the District
- Grow & attract quality jobs
- Prepare a diversity of talent for those quality jobs

**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

01 Focus recruitment efforts on five priority industry clusters

02 Develop pandemic-proof spaces, such as secure event space, wet labs, and residential units

03 Double-down on entrepreneurship training for a diversity of founders, including expanding Cortex’s Square One program

04 Serve as a talent training intermediary, especially for bioscience, cyber, and tech-related roles

**FIVE-YEAR GOALS** (2022 - 2026)

01 GROW QUALITY JOBS

10 additional life science companies in Cortex
15 additional national security companies in Cortex
15 additional general tech companies in Cortex

- Those companies will create 2,500 quality jobs
- 3 buildings in the District will be built or rehabbed
- We will collaborate on innovation-focused initiatives across the St. Louis region

02 PREPARE A DIVERSITY OF TALENT

- Cortex will expand the number of entrepreneurs trained through our Square One series of programs and launch training partnerships that are both sector-specific and sector-agnostic.
- We will measure success by tracking skills learned, the number of businesses growing, and the jobs they create.
- We will build talent training partnerships that will graduate 1,250 individuals and track the number who are still employed 2 years later. 70% of our workforce training graduates will be women and/or people of color.

**OUR TARGET**

**OUTCOME**

Foster an inclusive innovation economy in St. Louis

“Cortex is a prime example of an organization leveraging its resources to advance economic justice in the St. Louis region. In partnership with SLDC, Cortex has directed its development partners to prioritize women and minority businesses in the contracting process and elevate community voices to ensure their needs are central in development decisions.”

– Neal Richardson, President & CEO, St. Louis Development Corporation
Vir Biotechnology is a publicly traded, commercial-stage immunology company focused on cutting-edge technologies to treat, prevent, and even cure some of the world’s most serious infectious diseases. Vir has a proven track record of developing life-saving therapeutics—first for Ebola and again for COVID-19. Headquartered in San Francisco, its global footprint includes sites in Bellinzona, Switzerland; Portland, OR; and now, offices and labs in the St. Louis Cortex Innovation District.

Building on a successful Series B funding round, St. Louis cancer-therapy startup Wugen outgrew its founding space at the BioGenerator Labs inside the BioSTL Building and moved its headquarters to newly created lab space a block away, remaining within the Cortex Innovation Community. The company currently employs 89 people, who are developing its pipeline of off-the-shelf cell therapies to treat a broad range of hematological and solid tumor malignancies.

“St. Louis has established itself as a science and biotechnology hub, and our presence here further enhances our close collaboration with institutions like Saint Louis University and Washington University, helping to fuel our mission to deliver a world without infectious disease.”

– Lisa Parcell, Vice President of Research and Translational Medicine, Vir

“Per Scholas took the time to make sure we were tech savvy, could conduct ourselves in a professional setting, and had a strong resume. They made sure we knew how to build a cover letter and make our LinkedIn pages great so that recruiters would come to us.”

– Seanje Lenox-Wise, 2022 Per Scholas Graduate

Cortex partnered with Per Scholas in 2022 to expand to St. Louis. The majority of its first graduating class already is employed in cybersecurity positions throughout the region. Per Scholas’ tuition-free, 15-week, technical training program up-skills workers and helps local businesses fill critical open jobs. 88% of Per Scholas learners are people of color, and more than one-third identify as women. The annual average salary of a St. Louis Per Scholas graduate is $53,876.

“Square One provided the tools, coaching, and network access that helped launch De Mi Madre Aprendí. Without the guidance of the Square One team, I would not have had the confidence to apply and win a BALSA grant to fund my business and take it from idea to reality, online and in stores. I appreciate the mentoring and ongoing coaching support to keep me and my business growing.”

– Leslie Hernandez, Founder & CEO, De Mi Madre Aprendí

WUGEN

GROW QUALITY JOBS

VIR

PREPARE A DIVERSITY OF TALENT

PER SCHOLAS

SQUARE ONE

Success Spotlightst
2022 Don’t Just Take Our Word for It

“Cortex continues to help solidify St. Louis as a leader in bioscience, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing and is helping to create jobs for St. Louis working families, strengthening neighborhoods across our city.”
— Tishaura O. Jones, Mayor, City of St. Louis

“The Cortex team has taken the STL 2030 Jobs Plan and created real, implementable solutions that will benefit the entire region. Through their focus on creating a more equitable St. Louis, Cortex works to build a diverse pipeline of talent, strong partnerships, and unique spaces.”
— Jason Hall, Chief Executive Officer, Greater St. Louis, Inc.

“Through its focus on creating a more equitable St. Louis region, Cortex works to develop jobs, partnerships, and unique spaces for people to gather.”
— Rodney Crim, CEO & President, St. Louis Economic Development Partnership

“In 2022 we worked closely with Cortex and CIC to relocate the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce offices from its South Grand location to the District. The move would not have been possible without the help of Cortex team members and their introductions to so many leaders and community influencers. We are now better positioned to serve our members in this collaborative space toward our mission of improving the economic impact of Hispanic businesses in the St. Louis region.”
— Martha Garcia Kampen, President & CEO, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

2022 Total Expenses

Cortex is seen by many as a St. Louis Success Story
— ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Cortex is built upon the idea that collaboration can lead to solutions to big problems
— ST. LOUIS MAGAZINE

“Thinksgiving” is strategic thinking and creative problem-solving sessions in the Cortex District
— FOX2NOW

Cortex is perceived to be a St. Louis success story
— ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Cortex is seen as being built upon the idea that collaboration can lead to solutions to big problems
— ST. LOUIS MAGAZINE

“Thinksgiving” is described as strategic thinking and creative problem-solving sessions in the Cortex District
— FOX2NOW
Located at the corner of Clayton & Sarah, this planned and approved seven-story development will provide 165 residential units with street-level commercial, office and retail space. With both market-rate and affordable units, there will be something for everyone. Dog lovers will appreciate the dog park! We expect the project to be completed by and new neighbors to move in by the end of 2024.