

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002-4239

RESOLUTION ENDORSING CREATION OF A BROADBAND ACCESS TASK FORCE

WHEREAS, we live in a digital age and while technology expands opportunities for a significant number of people, it can also divide us by highlighting disparities between those with engaged and meaningful access and those without; and

WHEREAS, it is recognized that the region's economy can be strengthened and its communities transformed by fostering the development of broadband internet access throughout the Washington metropolitan area; and

WHEREAS, a number of public and private entities have documented difficulties in extending the benefits of technology and digital communication access to everyone in the Washington metropolitan area thereby diminishing the possibility for all of the region's citizens and residents to join the economic mainstream; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (Board) previously adopted the report and findings of its Digital Divide Task Force, which in part identified the need for public and private activities to increase Internet access to all segments of the region's population; and

WHEREAS, identifying and supporting local and regional broadband access initiatives to help residents, businesses, schools, public agencies and community organizations make effective use of this technology to achieve their program management, telework, and service delivery goals while providing a greater experience for visitors to the region will have significant positive impact on the region's economy; and

WHEREAS, on November 9, 2005, the Board recommended the creation of a task force to examine issues related to broadband access and digital inclusion throughout the Washington metropolitan area.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS THAT:

1. A Broadband Access Task Force be created to:

- Foster economic growth through the development of a region-wide, broadband access network
- Improve broadband access for residents, businesses, public employees and visitors and ensure that all residents have access to one or more means of broadband connectivity
- Define the role of governments in supporting the development of open-air/wireless (free/fee) broadband access networks and/or hotspots
- Support the COG Board and Transportation Planning Board goals for increasing the proportion of teleworkers in the region
- Inform policy-makers regarding the technology and telecommunications issues associated with region-wide broadband network development and deployment

2. The Task Force be limited in duration to a twelve month period to begin in January 2006 and end in January 2007, and be comprised of elected officials and subject matter experts from both the public and private sectors, and staffed by COG.

3. The Task Force deliverables will be:

- A one-day, regional forum for policy-makers and subject matter experts to discuss and vet options for the development of a region-wide, broadband access network, including presentations and discussions related to model programs, best practices, and promising approaches
- Policy recommendations that support the development of a region-wide, publicly accessible broadband network, which can be adopted within the State of Maryland, Commonwealth of Virginia and the District of Columbia by either administrative or legislative means
- Report on regional initiatives and policy recommendations, to include steps local governments can take to support the goals and recommendations of the Task Force and outcomes associated with the regional forum
