

INTRODUCED: July 22, 2024

A RESOLUTION No. 2024-R026

To declare that equal access to high-speed gigabit internet access in every home; educational and training facility; and business of the City is a public necessity for all residents and to request that the Chief Administrative Officer develop and implement a “Digital Equity Assessment and Plan” to provide access to high-speed gigabit internet access to all residents.

Patron – Mr. Addison

Approved as to form and legality
by the City Attorney

PUBLIC HEARING: SEP 9 2024 AT 6 P.M.

WHEREAS, the Council believes that all residents of the city of Richmond should have reliable and affordable high-speed gigabit internet access in their homes, schools, parks, and communities, equitably, in all neighborhoods of the City; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, market failures have resulted in the exclusion of lower income communities, particularly Black and Brown families, from a rapidly changing digital society and economy that would allow affordable opportunities for telehealth, education, employment, and business opportunities, that are denied homes with high-speed gigabit internet access; and

AYES: _____ NOES: _____ ABSTAIN: _____

ADOPTED: _____ REJECTED: _____ STRICKEN: _____

WHEREAS, the Council believes that the COVID-19 pandemic exposed societal inequities in access to high-speed gigabit internet in parts of the City; and

WHEREAS, the Council believes that residents would benefit from digital inclusion efforts that provide educational and training programs that would bridge the digital divide across Richmond's neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, the Council re-affirms its support for the goals of the Commonwealth of Virginia's Commonwealth Connect plan, striving for universal broadband access across the state; and

WHEREAS, Council has adopted Resolution 2021-R019, which requested that the Chief Administrative Officer cause the development of a digital connectivity map, including both vertical assets and infrastructure owned by the City and of existing fiber networks, for the purpose of developing a strategy to provide universal broadband access across the city of Richmond for all residents and business owners;

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND:

That the Council hereby declares that equal access to high-speed gigabit internet access in every home; educational and training facility; and business of the City is a public necessity for all residents.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Council hereby requests that the Chief Administrative Officer develop and implement a "Digital Equity Assessment and Plan" to provide equal access to high-speed gigabit internet access to all residents that includes public-private partnerships to effectuate digital equity for residents and business owners in the City in order to close the digital divide in the City

by ensuring high-speed gigabit internet access to all underserved residences; educational and training facilities; and businesses.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE



Richmond City Council

The Voice of the People

Richmond, Virginia

Office of the Council Chief of Staff

Ordinance/Resolution Request

TO Laura Drewry, City Attorney

THROUGH LaTasha Holmes, Council Chief of Staff

FROM Steven Taylor, Council Policy Analyst

COPY Andreas Addison, 1st District Council Member
Tabrica Rentz, Deputy City Attorney
Adam Poser, Council Deputy Chief of Staff
Whitney Brown, 1st District Liaison

DATE July 16, 2024

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TITLE Declare that equal access to high-speed gigabit internet is a public necessity and request that the CAO develop a “Digital Equity Assessment and Plan” to improve equity in internet access.

This is a request for the drafting of an **Ordinance** **Resolution**

REQUESTING COUNCILMEMBER/PATRON

Andreas Addison

SUGGESTED STANDING COMMITTEE

Government Operations

ORDINANCE/RESOLUTION SUMMARY

The resolution declares that equal access to high-speed gigabit internet, in every home of the city, is a public necessity. Additionally, the resolution calls on the Chief Administrative Office to develop and implement a “Digital Equity Assessment and Plan” to provide access to high-speed gigabit access to City residents.

BACKGROUND

The patron wishes to ensure that all residents have equal access to high-speed gigabit internet by declaring that such access is a public necessity and requesting that the Chief Administrative Officer develop a plan to ensure such access given observations that some areas of the city do not have equal access to the internet which compromises equitable access to health services, education, and economic opportunity.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Fiscal Impact Yes No

Budget Amendment Required Yes No

Estimated Cost or Revenue Impact \$ N/A

Note: No costs are associated with the declaration and request of the CAO at this writing.

Attachment/s Yes No