

# Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Broadband Access Task Force Work Plan

## **Mission:**

The mission of the Broadband Access Task Force is to strengthen the region's economy and transform its communities by fostering the development of broadband internet access throughout the National Capital Region, as a key feature of common public infrastructure. Building Upon the 2002 report and recommendations of COG's Digital Divide Task Force, the new effort will identify and promote 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, telemedicine, education, and service delivery goals while providing a greater experience for visitors to the region.

## **Key Issues:**

- o Access
- o Affordability
- o Utility

## **Goals:**

1. Foster economic growth through the development of technology neutral broadband access networks
2. 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
3. Define the role of governments in supporting the development of broadband access networks
4. Support the COG Board and Transportation Planning Board goals for increasing the proportion of teleworkers in the region
5. Inform policy-makers regarding the technology and telecommunications issues associated with region-wide broadband network development and deployment
6. Support recommendations that foster the development of - and steering to - content and applications that enable all residents, citizens, and visitors to participate in the digital economy once access to broadband is achieved

## **Staffing:**

Staffing for the task force will be drawn from the following individuals on an as needed basis:

Chris Willey, Chief, Office of Technology Programs and Services, MWCOG  
Lee Ruck, General Counsel, MWCOG  
Nick Ramfos, Chief, Alternative Commute Programs, MWCOG

## **Membership:**

Lori Waters, Supervisor, Loudoun County Board of Supervisors (*Chair*)  
Jim Scott, Delegate, Virginia House of Delegates (*led digital divide effort 2000-01*)  
Marilyn Praisner, Montgomery County Council  
Kirby Bowers, County Administrator, Loudoun County  
Ben Hecht, President & COO, One Economy Corporation  
Alan Shark, Executive Director, Public Technology Institute  
Bill Mularie, Telework Consortium, Inc.  
Bill Dean, CEO, MCDean

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Brian Chavis, CEO, ARGroup

COG CIO Committee Representatives:

District of Columbia – Robert LeGrande

Maryland – Charlie Wilson (Prince George's County)

Virginia – Scott Bashore (Loudoun County)

Telecommunications industry association representatives:

Carolyn Brandon, Vice Pres., Policy, CTIA – The Wireless Association

Eleanor Winter, Sen. VP, National Cable and Telecommunications Association

## **Deliverables:**

- A one-day, regional forum for policy-makers and subject matter experts to discuss and vet options for the development of technology-neutral broadband access networks, including presentations and discussions related to model programs, best practices, and promising approaches
- Policy recommendations that support the development of technology-neutral broadband access networks, 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
- A toolkit for local governments to use as a guide – or blueprint - to develop local broadband initiatives and policies

## **Subcommittees:**

1. Regional Broadband Forum Planning: Coordinate, plan and manage a regional forum on broadband access to be held in late September 2006, and to make recommendations for potential follow-on events in 2007 and beyond.

Scott Bashore (Chair)

Chris Willey

2. Policy Research and Recommendations: Coordinate and conduct research on broadband policy implications throughout the region; to include private sector build-out and implementation barriers and noted instances of such barriers. Barriers may be legal, financial, or political and may vary based upon jurisdiction. Actual (best practices) solutions as well as possible creative solutions to address legal and political hurdles will be considered.

Bill Dean (Co-Chair)

Brian Chavis (Co-Chair)

Ben Hecht

Lee Ruck

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments  
Broadband Access Task Force Work Plan

3. Technology Research and Recommendations: Coordinate and conduct research on technologies that currently support broadband networks throughout the region and those under consideration or development.

Alan Shark (Chair)  
Andrew Afflerbach

4. Funding Development: Solicit and secure funding for an intern to conduct research pertaining to the efforts of subcommittees (2) and (3), in addition to seed funding for the regional forum, subcommittee (1)'s charge.

David Robertson (Chair)  
Chris Willey

Subcommittees (2) and (3) will work with George Mason University's School of Public Policy to manage an intern/graduate student or team to conduct necessary research to support the mission and goals of these subcommittees and the task force. The COG Attorneys Committee will be requested to review legal hurdles and propose alternate solutions.

When the issue of digital divide is addressed, consider that there are several such divides: economic haves/have nots; age cohorts; urban/suburban/rural geographic sectors, etc.

**Timeline:** (bi-monthly committee meetings beginning in February)

January 2006:	COG Board approved establishment of task force
February-March 2006:	Initial task force meetings to clarify plan and goals
March-May 2006:	Research and other tasks from February meeting
June-September 2006:	Work begun on task force report
September 2006:	Progress report to COG Board
October 2006:	Regional Forum held; Initial draft of report
December 2006:	Second draft of report
January 2007:	Report finalized
February 2007:	Report presented to COG Board (task force sunsets)

**Budget:**

COG will seek grant funding from private sector sponsors, in particular technology firms, to support anticipated costs associated with the task force. The COG Board will be advised of progress and any funding action required.

Consultant/grad student	\$15,000
Meetings/Conferences	<u>\$ 5,000</u>
TOTAL	\$20,000

**Potential Corporate Sponsors:**

Intel	Microsoft	Columbia Technologies	Juniper Networks
Wall Street Journal	Cisco	Tropos Networks	