

Digital Divide Taskforce

Meeting Summary

September 23, 2021 | 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

Zoom Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9tvdadhEYA>

Members in Attendance:

Abu-Bakr Al-Jafri (Caltrans), Adriana Mendoza (Cox Communications), Alessandra Muse (Imperial Valley Economic Development Corporation), Ana María Ardón (National Latino Research Center [CSUSM]), Angelica Santiago (National Latino Research Center), Barry Pollard (The Urban Collaborative Project), Bill Valle (City of Chula Vista), Brady Bishop (San Diego Futures Foundation), Chanelle Hawken (Cox Communications), Chris Schmidt (Caltrans), Christine Mailloux (The Utility Reform Network), Christy Williams (National CORE), Christopher Beauchamp (Communications Workers of America), Cody Petterson (San Diego County), David Reed (University of Colorado), Dennis Gakunga (City of Chula Vista), Derrick Robinson, PhD (Center on Policy Initiatives), Dominique L. Cano-Stacco (Verizon Wireless), Eric Roark (City of Chula Vista), Felipe Monroig (Charter Communications), Gladys Palpallatoc (California Emerging Technology Fund), Irina Prokhorova (San Diego Futures Foundation), Jason Anderson (Cleantech), Joe Britton (SDG&E), Jerry Sheehan (San Diego State University), John Gerstenberg (City of Chula Vista), John Osborne (AT&T), Julio Figueroa (AT&T), Lucero Chavez (Parent Institute for Quality Education), Maureen Philips (Library Friends of San Diego County), Meagan Openshaw (City of Imperial Beach), Melina Pereira (Caltrans), Michael Hadland (Charter Communications), Mina Nguyen (San Diego for Every Child), Nerea Urtasun (County of San Diego), Paul Morris (San Diego Housing Commission), Ramesh Rao (UC San Diego Qualcomm Institute), Roland Ok (Southern California Association of Governments), Sam Amen (Caltrans), Sean Wilcock (Southern Border Broadband Consortium), Shahriar Afshar (Verizon), Sharlene Ornelas (SANDAG Social Services Transportation Advisory Council), Summer Bales (San Diego Chamber), Terry Loftus (San Diego County Office of Education), Timothy Kelley (Imperial Valley Economic Development Corporation), Willie Thomas (SDG&E), Xiomalys Crespo (City of San Diego), Yadira Whitney (Caltrans); Antoinette Meier, Dinara Ussenova, Jack Christensen, Jackie Tovar, Krystal Ayala, Lindsey Hansen, and, Tim Hornyak (SANDAG)

1. New! - Digital Equity Story Map Overview

Krystal Ayala, Senior Partnerships Strategist at SANDAG introduced the recently published, Digital Divide Story Map - which provides an overview of the digital divide in the San Diego Region. The interactive story map is available on the SANDAG Digital Equity website: www.sandag.org/digitalequity.

Shahriar Afshar, Verizon Wireless, complimented SANDAG on the story map. Barry Pollard, The Urban Collaborative Project, acknowledged that the story map is a great tool and asked if it was possible to segment data to the census tract to evaluate neighborhood conditions. Antoinette, SANDAG, acknowledged the importance of granular data and indicated that SANDAG is planning to conduct a regional survey to better understand broadband access and adoption within our communities. The

survey will be an early action outlined in the forthcoming Digital Divide Action Plan. Gladys Palpallatoc, California Emerging Technology Fund, informed the group of a recent research endeavor with PEW Research regarding low-income connectivity, participation, and adoption. Gladys suggested SANDAG and other interested agencies connect with PEW and the University of Southern California.

2. Digital Equity Strategy Draft – Comments and Feedback

Antoinette, SANDAG, noted that staff had recently published the Draft Regional Digital Equity Strategy and solicited feedback from the Taskforce.

Paul Morris, SDHC, provided comments on minor grammatical errors in the report to address.

John Osborne, AT&T, asked that the strategy consider evaluating the total cost needed to expand broadband infrastructure.

Jerry Sheehan, SDSU, suggested that the strategies put forward be prioritized.

David Reed, University of Colorado, suggested that the definition of broadband, account for other user-focused metrics other than speed such as the reliability or latency of service. Jerry suggested the middle mile expansions strategy account for open access interconnection points, which could leverage partnerships for last-mile deployment. He also recommended that the 5th Strategy be expanded to include a variety of public, private, or non-profit partners. Dinara Ussenova, SANDAG, commented that the reliability and redundancy of the service is an important consideration for future broadband deployment efforts to consider.

Barry, The Urban Collaborative Project, suggested that the Strategy incorporate a timeline to ensure progress on closing the digital divide can be evaluated over time. Barry emphasized the strategy's need for investments in rural and urban areas to address digital redlining and accountability disparities.

Jason, Cleantech, echoed Barry's and suggested the Strategy integrate accountability of internet service providers (ISPs) to ensure investments provide greater and more affordable services to communities.

Ana Ardon, National Latino Research Center – CSUSM, suggested more content on the importance of privacy protection be incorporated into the digital literacy section.

Dominique L. Cano-Stacco, Verizon Wireless, noted that the gap analysis could be expanded to include non-fixed broadband services such as satellite or mobile services that may also provide broadband service to rural and tribal communities.

Julio Figueroa, AT&T, echoed Dominique and noted that fiber infrastructure for broadband is very costly. Julio acknowledged the importance of collaborative public-private partnerships in expanding infrastructure in the region and maximizing public investments.

John Gerstenberg, City of Chula Vista, asked about the feasibility of partnering with satellite service providers to serve areas that are hard to reach via fixed broadband technologies.

3. Regional Updates:

Jack Christensen, SANDAG, provided regional, state, and federal legislative updates. Learn more about the legislative updates shared here:

https://www.sandag.org/uploads/meetingid/meetingid_5908_29721.pdf

Tim Kelley, Imperial Valley EDC, presented and provided an update on Southern Border Broadband Consortium initiatives.

Antoinette, SANDAG, shared SANDAG donated computers to the San Diego Futures Foundation. Irina Prokhorova, San Diego Futures Foundation, shared information about SDFP's computer donation program.