SCAG's Digital Action Plan

Emerging Technology Committee
October 27, 2022

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THE DIGITAL DIVIDE
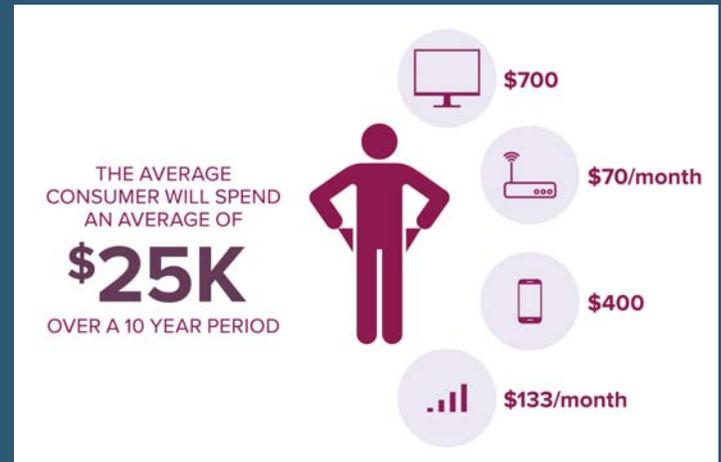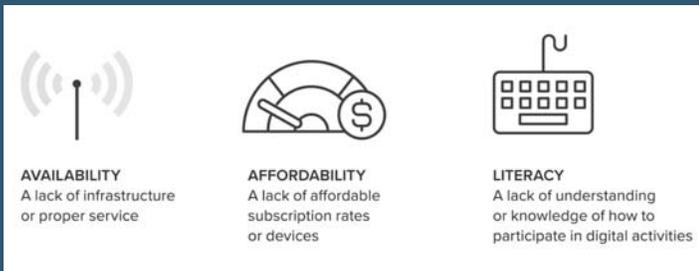
The Benefits of Broadband

- **Accessibility:** Broadband helps people with disabilities to participate in society.
- **Civic engagement:** Broadband empowers civic engagement and effective governance
- **Economic development:** Broadband fosters economic growth
- **Education:** Broadband can enhance education
- **Public health:** Broadband can improve access to healthcare
- **Public safety:** Broadband can help create a safer society
- **Sustainability:** Broadband is a Green Strategy

What is the Digital Divide?

- Simplified Definition: *"The gap between those with internet access and those without it"*
- Reality: There is no *one* digital divide, there are *multiple* divides

Multiple Divides

AVAILABILITY
A lack of infrastructure or proper service

AFFORDABILITY
A lack of affordable subscription rates or devices

LITERACY
A lack of understanding or knowledge of how to participate in digital activities

THE AVERAGE CONSUMER WILL SPEND AN AVERAGE OF **$25K** OVER A 10 YEAR PERIOD
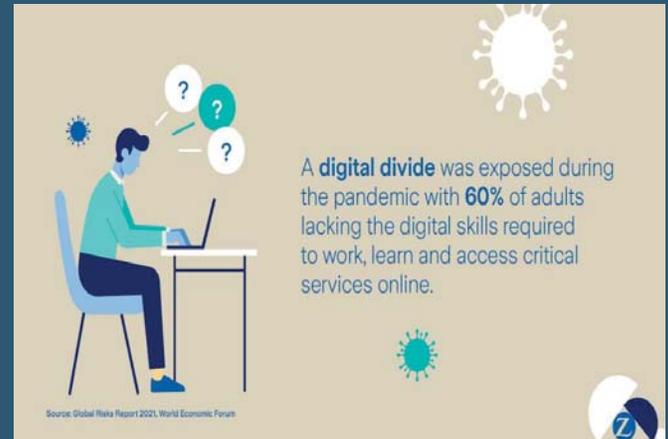
$700
$70/month
$400
$133/month

Snapshot of the Region

- **9 to 10%** of households do not have access to adequate internet speeds or a computer
- **13%** of the Black population do not have access to broadband and **5%** do not own a computer
- **11%** of the Native American/Indigenous population do not have access to broadband and **4%** do not own a computer
- **12%** of the Latino/Hispanic population do not have access to broadband and **4%** do not own to a computer
- **20%** of Seniors aged 65 and over do not have access to broadband and **12%** do not own a computer
- **70%** of those without internet are **concentrated** within **low-income households**

Societal Impacts

- Senior citizens and minority communities are targets for **online crime**
- The **"homework gap"** experienced by children of low-income households can prevent social mobility.
- **60%** of the Latino/Hispanic population and **70%** of the Black population **unprepared for jobs** which require digital skills
  - Disqualified or underprepared for **86% of jobs** in the U.S. by 2045.

A **digital divide** was exposed during the pandemic with **60%** of adults lacking the digital skills required to work, learn and access critical services online.

Source: Global Risks Report 2021, World Economic Forum

WORK EFFORTS FROM SCAG

Resolution 21-629-2 – Pledge to Bridge the Digital Divide

- **SCAG Resolution 21-629-2**: SCAG pledged to assist in bridging the digital divide
  - Develop a **Digital Action Plan**
  - Collect and invest in broadband data and conduct analysis
  - Conduct technical studies
  - Incorporate broadband into SCAG's programs

Work Efforts

- **Joint Request for Qualifications for Prospective Partnerships (RFQPP)**
- **ACP/Go-Human**
- **Broadband/VMT Report**
- **UC Davis Telework Study**
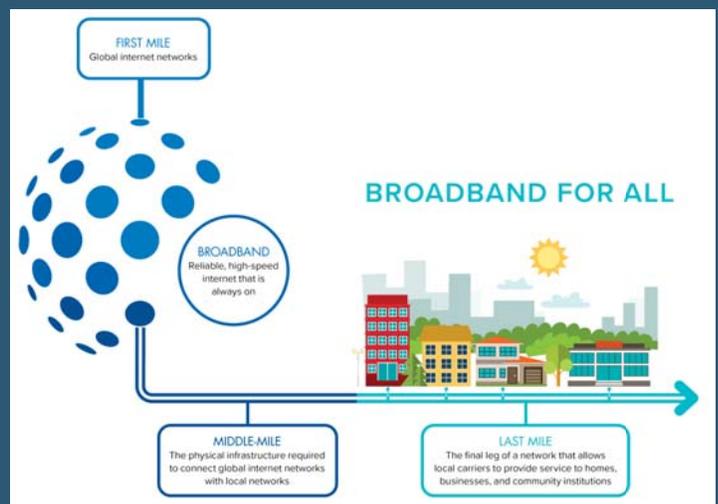- **Permit Streamlining Project**
- **Connect SoCal**

DIGITAL ACTION PLAN

Main Contents

- **Broadband 101**
- **Vision, Goals and Strategies**
- **Digital Divide 101**
- **Causes of the Digital Divide**
- **State of the Region**
- **Work Efforts**
- **Actions and Deliverables (Work in Progress)**

FIRST MILE
Global internet networks

BROADBAND FOR ALL

BROADBAND
Reliable, high-speed
internet that is
always on

MIDDLE-MILE
The physical infrastructure required
to connect global internet networks
with local networks

LAST MILE
The final leg of a network that allows
local carriers to provide service to homes,
businesses, and community institutions

Vision Statement

"We envision an equitable region that fosters accessibility and adoption of affordable high-speed broadband and digital devices for all it's residents"

Goals

1. **Accessibility and Affordability** – Every household in the region should have access to affordable high-speed broadband services and high-quality devices

2. **Adoption** – All residents should have the confidence and skills to participate in digital activities

3. **Consensus** – Build partnerships and reach consensus that high-quality and affordable broadband is an essential service to everyone and provides economic, environmental and safety benefits

4. **Planning** – Develop broadband technical tools and studies which provide value to the region

SCAG Strategies

S SEEK AND SECURE

Seek and secure broadband funding for our local jurisdictions and stakeholders to deploy broadband infrastructure, digital devices, and advance digital equity initiatives.

C COORDINATE AND COLLABORATE

Coordinate, collaborate and build partnerships with public agencies, local jurisdictions, partners, and the public and align work efforts to collectively bridge the digital divide.

A ADVOCATE AND ASSIST

Advocate for better data, Southern California's fair share in funding, and open access to broadband networks and assist low-income and rural households in underserved and unserved communities.

G GATHER AND GAIN

Gather data and gain knowledge through broadband technical and strategic studies, disseminate findings and inform decision makers and the public.

Guiding Principles to BRIDGE the DIVIDE

B BREAK.

Break down barriers which inhibit the deployment of broadband infrastructure

R RESILIENCE.

Plan or advocate for networks that are efficient and assists in resiliency for communities and infrastructure

I INVEST.

Invest in communities affected by the digital divide

D DATA DRIVEN.

Collect and share data to determine opportunity zones and solutions

G GRASSROOTS.

Use a bottom-up approach and listen to and prioritize a community's needs

E EXPEDITE.

Develop solutions which can be quickly implemented and efficiently

D DETERMINE.

Determine funding opportunities and potential partnerships

I INNOVATE.

Promote an atmosphere which allows for healthy competition, innovative solutions which are speed driven, while remaining technologically agnostic

V VISIONARY.

Plan or advocate for networks that are scalable, sustainable and accommodate future needs and innovative technology

I INTEGRATE.

Integrate findings into traditional disciplines of transportation and land use planning

D DEPENDABLE.

Promote transparency and gain the trust of the public, other agencies, and stakeholders

E EDUCATE.

Educate the public, policy makers and stakeholders and build consensus for collective action

Proposed Actions and Deliverables

- Proposed Actions and Deliverables are currently in development
- Will be vetted **internally, with stakeholders, Regional Council and Policy Committees**
- Will be aligned with **Goals, Strategies, Guiding Principles**
- Consistent with **SCAG's Strategic Plan**
- **Assist and go beyond "Bridging the Digital Divide"**

Note: Proposed actions and deliverables are dependent on resources available

Next Steps

Milestones	Date
Subregional COG Executive Directors Meeting	October 26, 2022
Emerging Technology Committee	October 27, 2022
Transformation SoCal Working Group	November – December 2022
Equity Working Group	December 8, 2022
GLUE Council	December 12, 2022
1st Complete Draft to the Transportation Committee (Or other Policy Committees upon request)	January 5, 2023 (Tentative)
Final Digital Action Plan to Regional Council (Approval and Adoption)	Spring 2023

THANK YOU!

For more information, please visit:

Broadband Planning: scag.ca.gov/broadband