



Legislation Text

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Introductory*

**City of Baltimore
Council Bill R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmember Glover

A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning
Informational Hearing - Baltimore City Broadband Expansion

For the purpose of inviting the Baltimore City Department of Finance, the Comptroller, Baltimore City Information Technology, the Law Department, the Department of Transportation, and other relevant parties to discuss and present multiple options for broadband and high-speed data access within the City of Baltimore; discussing the City's powers or limitations regarding broadband expansion with regard to State law as well as City contracts and franchises already in place and the possibility of creating a municipal broadband utility to assist citizens in their accessibility to broadband; discussing possible policy or legislative reforms, and any other relevant information of interest to the Baltimore City Council in order to bring Baltimore City's broadband infrastructure and technology into the 21st Century.

Recitals

Whereas, the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened our need and dependence on broadband services to participate in remote employment and education;

Whereas, the digital divide adversely disproportionately affects the predominately black and brown population in Baltimore, many of whom live below the federal poverty line;

Whereas, the majority of broadband service customers for high-speed data are customers of one provider due to the lack of City franchisees;

Whereas, broadband technology has changed significantly with 5G technology, which allows high-speed data transmissions over the air;

Whereas, the City's ownership of its underground conduit system creates opportunities for fiber optic cable based broadband;

Whereas, Comcast has plans to impose data caps and fees associated with exceeding those caps on internet service;

Whereas, prior sessions of the Baltimore City Council have expressed interest in starting a municipal broadband service as a public utility;

Whereas, the citizens of Baltimore are demanding more service options as more services rely on broadband and consumers are “cutting the cord”;

Whereas, there is broad recognition from the Baltimore City Council and from local advocates that the process for finding providers and awarding franchises needs to be reformed to provide a competitive market that is necessary for regulating pricing; and

Whereas, the research and development of reforms for broadband expansion are possible and need to be discussed.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That the Council invites the Baltimore City Department of Finance, the Comptroller, Baltimore City Information Technology, the Law Department, the Department of Transportation, and other relevant parties to discuss and present multiple options for broadband and high speed data access within the City of Baltimore.

And be it further resolved, That it is the intention of the Council to use this informational hearing to discuss the City’s powers or limitations regarding broadband expansion with regard to State law as well as City contracts and franchises already in place and the possibility of creating a municipal broadband utility to assist citizens in their accessibility to broadband; possible policy or legislative reforms; and any other relevant information of interest to the Baltimore City Council in order to bring Baltimore City's broadband infrastructure and technology into the 21st Century.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Comptroller, the Director of Baltimore City Information Technology, the Director of Finance, the Acting City Solicitor, the Director of the Department of Transportation, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.