



Legislation Details (With Text)

**File #:** 18-0075R    **Version:** 0    **Name:** Informational Hearing - Municipal Broadband Feasibility Study  
**Type:** City Council Resolution    **Status:** Failed - End of Term  
**File created:** 3/26/2018    **In control:** Judiciary Committee  
**On agenda:**    **Final action:** 12/7/2020  
**Enactment date:**    **Enactment #:**  
**Title:** Informational Hearing - Municipal Broadband Feasibility Study

For the purpose of requesting that the Department of Finance, the Department of Transportation, and the Mayor’s Office of Information Technology appear before the City Council to discuss how they can collaborate to produce a formal feasibility study on developing a municipal-owned broadband network in Baltimore capable of ensuring that all Baltimore families have adequate internet access options.

**Sponsors:** President Young, Bill Henry, Brandon M. Scott, Eric T. Costello, Kristerfer Burnett, John Bullock, Leon F. Pinkett, III, Ryan Dorsey, Zeke Cohen, Sharon Green Middleton, Robert Stokes, Sr., Shannon Sneed, Mary Pat Clarke, Edward Reisinger

**Indexes:** Broadband, Informational Hearing, Municipal, Study

**Code sections:**

**Attachments:** 1. 18-0075R~1st Reader, 2. DOT 18-0075R, 3. BCIT 18-0075R, 4. BDC 18-0075R, 5. Finance 18-0075R

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
12/7/2020	0	City Council	Failed - End of Term	
7/22/2019	0	City Council	Reassigned	
12/3/2018	0	Judiciary and Legislative Investigations	Scheduled for a Public Hearing	
3/29/2018	0	The City Council	Refer to Dept. of Finance	
3/29/2018	0	The City Council	Refer to Dept. of Transportation	
3/29/2018	0	The City Council	Refer to Mayor's Office of Information Technology	
3/29/2018	0	The City Council	Refer to Baltimore Development Corporation	
3/26/2018	0	City Council	Introduced	
3/26/2018	0	City Council	Assigned	

**\* Warning:** This is an unofficial, introductory copy of the bill.  
The official copy considered by the City Council is the first reader copy.

**Introductory\***

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

Introduced by: President Young

## A Resolution Entitled

### A Council Resolution concerning **Informational Hearing - Municipal Broadband Feasibility Study**

For the purpose of requesting that the Department of Finance, the Department of Transportation, and the Mayor's Office of Information Technology appear before the City Council to discuss how they can collaborate to produce a formal feasibility study on developing a municipal-owned broadband network in Baltimore capable of ensuring that all Baltimore families have adequate internet access options.

#### **Recitals**

Internet access is essential to function in today's society, the need to make use of some internet service or another in order to take advantage of all available opportunities seems to increase every day. Internet access allows people to more efficiently do nearly everything, including applying for a job, renewing a driver's license, doing homework, or just being part of and actively participating in one's community. In order to be effective, that access must occur at adequate speeds. Those with no, or limited, access to the internet are increasingly being left behind.

Faster bandwidths are also necessary for telemedicine, distance learning, public safety, and economic development. Increasingly, many work from home and also require higher bandwidths. Companies choose to locate in those communities with improved infrastructure and leave those with poor infrastructure.

Although Baltimore has always been a city that embraces innovation and understands the value of infrastructure, in regard to internet access we are in danger of falling behind. Within Baltimore, 20 to 40% of residents do not connect to the Internet at home through wired access. Even those who do connect often lack access to the next-generation speeds that will be needed to fully take advantage of the newest group of online tools - only about 10% of Baltimore homes have access to speeds approaching that 1 Gigabit/second standard.

Baltimore has long sought, and been denied, investment in fiber to the premises (FTTP) internet networks from the private sector. The current federal administration's repeal of Obama-era regulations ensuring that internet providers provide access to all content and applications regardless of the source may further reduce the incentive for private internet providers to build out their networks since they will now be able to financially benefit from internet congestion. In this environment, it is time for Baltimore to consider joining the roughly 150 or more municipalities nationwide who have deployed municipal-owned FTTP networks to ensure that their citizens have the ability to take advantage of all of the opportunities that the internet offers.

Before making a decision about launching a new City internet utility, it is important to get an accurate picture of the costs and benefits that a municipal-owned FTTP network would bring to Baltimore. The various funding options for publically or privately financing a FTTP network, as well as possibilities for public/private sponsorships, should also be formally explored. Baltimore cannot afford to be left on the wrong side of the digital divide. If the private sector refuses to address these issues on its own, the City needs to take a hard and long look at its options for ensuring adequate internet access options for all Baltimore families.

**Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore**, That the Council requests that the Department of Finance, the Department of Transportation, and the Mayor's Office of Information Technology appear before it to discuss how they can collaborate to produce a formal feasibility study on developing a municipal-owned broadband network in Baltimore capable of ensuring that all Baltimore families have adequate internet access options.

**And be it further resolved**, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Director of Finance, the Director of Transportation, the Chief Information Officer, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

