THE COMMITTEE FOR GREATER LA RELEASES FIRST OF ITS KIND POLICY BLUEPRINT TO ACHIEVE DIGITAL EQUITY IN BROADBAND ACCESS FOR LOS ANGELES

The blueprint focuses on actionable recommendations so that everyone in the County adopts broadband service by 2027, and everyone has the means to access high-quality, fiber-based internet services at affordable prices by 2040.

SEPTEMBER 22, 2022 (Los Angeles, CA) — The Committee for Greater LA (the Committee), a group of civic leaders working to advance system changes and dismantle institutional racism, today released "Connecting Communities Countywide" a first of its kind policy blueprint (Blueprint) roadmap for delivering the systemic changes to the broadband service marketplace with a near-term outcome of universal broadband adoption in Los Angeles and a longer-term outcome where everyone in the County is connected to affordable, fiber-based broadband services.

The Blueprint was developed by the Committee's Internet Action Team (IAT) along with input from more than 130 individuals from across sectors, including government, academia, business, technology, and community leaders. The Blueprint centers on three objectives:

1. Universal Adoption: By 2027, all L.A. County residents are connected to broadband service of at least 100/20 Mbps for $30 or less per month.
2. A Fiber Future: By 2040, every L.A. County resident has the means to access, afford, and adopt fiber-based broadband service and adopt fiber-based service with multi-gigabit symmetric speeds by 2040.
3. Sustained advocacy: Growing and sustaining an ecosystem of community advocates in Los Angeles focused on broadband equity to end the digital divide.

"In step with our commitment to building a more equitable Los Angeles, the Committee for Greater LA sees increasing access to fast, reliable, and affordable internet to all Angelenos as a key component to achieving its mission," said Miguel A. Santana, Chair of the Committee for Greater LA and President and CEO of the Weingart Foundation. "While there are many initiatives that address

the digital divide, this is the first policy blueprint that provides a roadmap to harness and coordinate efforts for bold, systemic, and progressive action for lasting change around broadband equity."

Across its three objectives–universal adoption, a fiber future, and sustained advocacy– the Blueprint outlines a range of actions across sectors to achieve digital equity. These include:

- Widespread adoption of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) to improve transparency around quality of services, and the expansion of affordability programs;
- Creation of a Countywide Internet Infrastructure Agency for Los Angeles County responsible for a range of items – specific to the delivery, management, and governance of broadband infrastructure and service provision – to ensure comprehensive oversight, efficient collaboration, and effective intervention; and
- Formalizing a Digital Equity "backbone" organization that sets an agenda that accommodates and responds to a shared community voice on digital equity.

"Incorporating the voices of many partners working on digital equity, our Blueprint focuses on actions that local and regional governmental entities can take to approach broadband policies through the lens of the public interest in L.A.," said Jarrett Barrios, Co-Chair of the Internet Action Team of the Committee for Greater L.A. and Senior Vice President, Strategy and Programs, at the California Community Foundation. "We ask who decides what government investments in fiber infrastructure, wireless networks, subsidy programs, or digital literacy training should be, now and in the future, and what systems inform those decisions."

The Internet Action Team—comprised of leaders from government, civic, philanthropic, tech, economic development, education, and health sectors, including academics, practitioners, and business and community leaders—worked with members of the Broadband Equity Partnership, led by HR&A Advisors, Inc. and CTC Technology and Energy, to develop the Blueprint.

"We have been inspired by the groundswell of community support to build a more inclusive digital future," said Evan Spiegel, Co-Chair of the Internet Action Team and CEO of Snap, Inc. "We have a unique opportunity to come together across sectors to ensure that Los Angeles is a national leader in broadband equity and to help unlock the full potential of people and businesses in our region."

"Internet access has always been vital for people and families to learn, work, and access life-saving resources and information. Yet, quality, affordable internet remains out of reach for far too many people in Los Angeles County," said Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Chair, Holly J. Mitchell, who authored a motion establishing a Director of Digital Equity for the County. "We've seen how Black and Latino households are especially impacted by the digital divide, adding to racial disparities that continue to challenge our communities. I commend the Committee for Greater LA for their leadership in prioritizing digital equity. Los Angeles can and will be a leader in closing the digital divide and I am energized to see cross-sector leaders come together to make it happen."

"We are encouraged by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors' unanimous decision to establish a Director of Digital Equity for the county. This position is a signal of L.A.'s potential to serve as a national model for regional coordination around digital equity," said Barrios.

The Blueprint makes the case for urgent action on digital equity. Though many Angelenos rely on high-speed internet for school, work, and resources, far too many people in L.A. County are left behind. Decades of digital redlining practices in many of L.A. County's communities of color and low-income communities have worked to systematically disadvantage residents from accessing affordable, reliable, and high-speed internet. One in three Los Angeles Unified School District students do not have access to affordable, high-speed broadband internet at home. Twenty-five percent of low-income residents in California cite affordability as the main barrier to broadband access, and approximately 50% of the families in the bottom 20% of the household income distribution are unconnected or under-connected.

"Many advocates, foundations, and community leaders have sounded the alarm on the need to ensure all Angelenos have the means to access affordable, quality internet at home," said L.A. City Councilmember Nithya Raman, Chair of the Information, Technology, & General Services Council Committee and member of the Internet Action Team "Connectivity is not shared equally across our city and county, leaving many students, business owners, low-income residents, and communities of color behind. Now is the time for bold action to ensure the opportunities the internet can provide are available to all — and I am committed to working with my colleagues to position Los Angeles as a leader in broadband access."

To access the report, please visit: https://nogoingback.la/action-teams/internet-action-team/

ABOUT THE COMMITTEE FOR GREATER LA:
The Committee for Greater LA assembled civic leaders at the start of the COVID pandemic to prioritize the recovery of L.A. County's most marginalized communities. It is a cross-sectoral group of Angelenos who share a vision that our region's response to the COVID pandemic can advance systems change and dismantle the institutions and policies that have perpetuated institutional racism. Its goal is sweeping systems change to ensure vulnerable and marginalized communities will be better off than they were before the crisis– there is #NoGoingBackLA. For more information, visit nogoingback.la.