RESOLUTION NO. 2020-262

SUPPORTING INCREASED BROADBAND ACCESS TO UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT RIVERSIDE COUNTY AND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

WHEREAS, closing the digital divide is important and provides long-term community benefits that include the ability to fully engage in the digital economy, access existing and emerging services, expand economic opportunities and bridge the economic divide; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the need for available, reliable and affordable broadband services in all communities; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused schools to shift to distance learning; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has made the digital divide within low-income and rural communities more apparent; and

WHEREAS, the County of Riverside recognizes that cost and low household income are the primary barriers to broadband access; and

WHEREAS, high speed broadband service is important to all residents, businesses and institutions and is desirable where residents and visitors work, live, learn and play; and

WHEREAS, high speed broadband enables working from home and remote workers, enhances business efficiencies, drives job creation throughout the region, and connects customers and partners worldwide to goods and services; and

WHEREAS, high speed broadband is a “green technology” that can reduce impacts on the environment and shrinks our regional carbon footprint, offsetting vehicle trips and use of resources; and

WHEREAS, high speed broadband greatly expands the ability of residents to access medical, behavioral, and oral health services and the capacity of public health officials to monitor and respond to health threats such as COVID-19 and other diseases; and

WHEREAS, high speed broadband enables greater civic participation and brings communities together, helps improve public safety and makes our transportation systems more resilient and efficient; and

WHEREAS, effective emergency services require using high speed broadband to integrate data in real time from all available sources, so decision makers have access to the information necessary for the
protection of lives and property;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, FOUND, DETERMINED, AND ORDERED by
the Board of Supervisors of the County of Riverside in regular session assembled on December 8, 2020,
that the Board:

1. Supports many of the goals of the United States Federal Communications Commission’s and
   the California Public Utilities Commission’s rules and regulations, and supports their
   programs and funding opportunities that support broadband deployment opportunities to
   bridge the digital divide; and

2. Supports Governor Newsom’s Executive Order N-73-20 signed August 14, 2020, which
   seeks to accelerate work towards closing gaps in access to reliable broadband networks
   throughout California; and

3. Supports collaboration with Los Angeles, Orange, Imperial, Riverside, San Bernardino, San
   Diego and Ventura Counties, broadband providers, school districts (K-12), community
   college districts, universities, community and business stakeholders, Regional Broadband
   Consortiums, California Emerging Technology Fund, the State of California and other
   federal and regional organizations that have similar goals to increase broadband access
   throughout Southern California; and

4. Determines that closing the digital divide is important and provides long-term community
   benefits; and

5. Supports requesting grant funding from the State and Federal government for a regional
   program that provides funding for free internet access for qualifying residents that bridges
   the economic digital divide; and

6. Supports the goal of a minimum broadband speed capability of 100 megabits per second
   today and 1 gigabit per second by 2030 for all residential and business customers within the
   urban, suburban and rural communities of our region; and

7. Supports working with collaborating jurisdictions to affect the deployment decisions of
   broadband providers by ensuring permitting fees are set at a reasonable level; reducing the
   cost of entry and operation of broadband systems in our communities; reducing the risks of
delays during the planning, permitting and construction phases; providing opportunities for
increasing revenue and creating new avenues for competitive entry; and

8. Supports working with collaborating jurisdictions to identify broadband opportunity zones
in underserved communities; and

9. Upon identifying broadband opportunity zones, supports working towards the creation of a
regional effort that would allow local jurisdictions to develop specific rules to expedite low
cost broadband deployment by internet service providers, potentially including such features
as: waivers for microprojects, deployment of broadband infrastructure in underserved
communities and implementation of fixed wireless or other broadband technologies in rural
communities; and

10. Supports consistent expedited broadband permitting processes throughout participating
jurisdictions; and

11. Supports the concept of “Dig Once” whereby conduit is installed for future or immediate
use for wireless towers, fiber optic or other comparable broadband network installation,
whenever underground construction occurs in a roadway.