

ACCESS 67 COUNTY CHAMPIONS GUIDEBOOK



All About Florida

COUNTIES
CONNECTING
COMMUNITIES



20
21





A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT RALPH THOMAS

As President of the Florida Association of Counties (FAC), I am proud to work hand-in-hand with my fellow counties and stakeholders towards a comprehensive strategy that addresses the lack of critical telecommunication and technologies for counties small, medium, and large. The fight continues today. Access 67 represents FAC's goal to secure sustainable and equal access to broadband for all counties, rural and urban alike, and acts as the leading body to direct legislative efforts across local, state, and federal channels.

I would like to thank my county peers for continuing to use your voice on this issue. It is because of you, our county champions, that we have been able to take such large

leaps in closing the Digital Divide within and across our communities. To further our efforts, FAC has prepared this guidebook—complete with current advocacy outlooks and an abundance of resources—to help organize the broadband movement in your region. This guidebook is your directive, your reference, and your support: use it to your advantage. Together, we can take the next step so that your communities may organize efficiently and, eventually, gain access for all.

RALPH THOMAS
FAC PRESIDENT | WAKULLA COUNTY

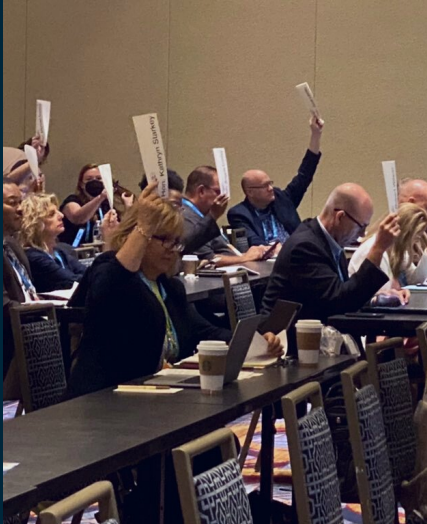


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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PRESIDENTIAL SELECT COMMITTEE ON BROADBAND



Chair Larry Harvey
Putnam County



Ken Cornell
Alachua County



Kimblin NeSmith
Gadsden County



Susan Adams
Indian River County



Ron Moore
Madison County



Vice Chair Gregg Weiss
Palm Beach County



Eileen Higgins
Miami-Dade County



Viviana Janer
Osceola County



Charlie Justice
Pinellas County



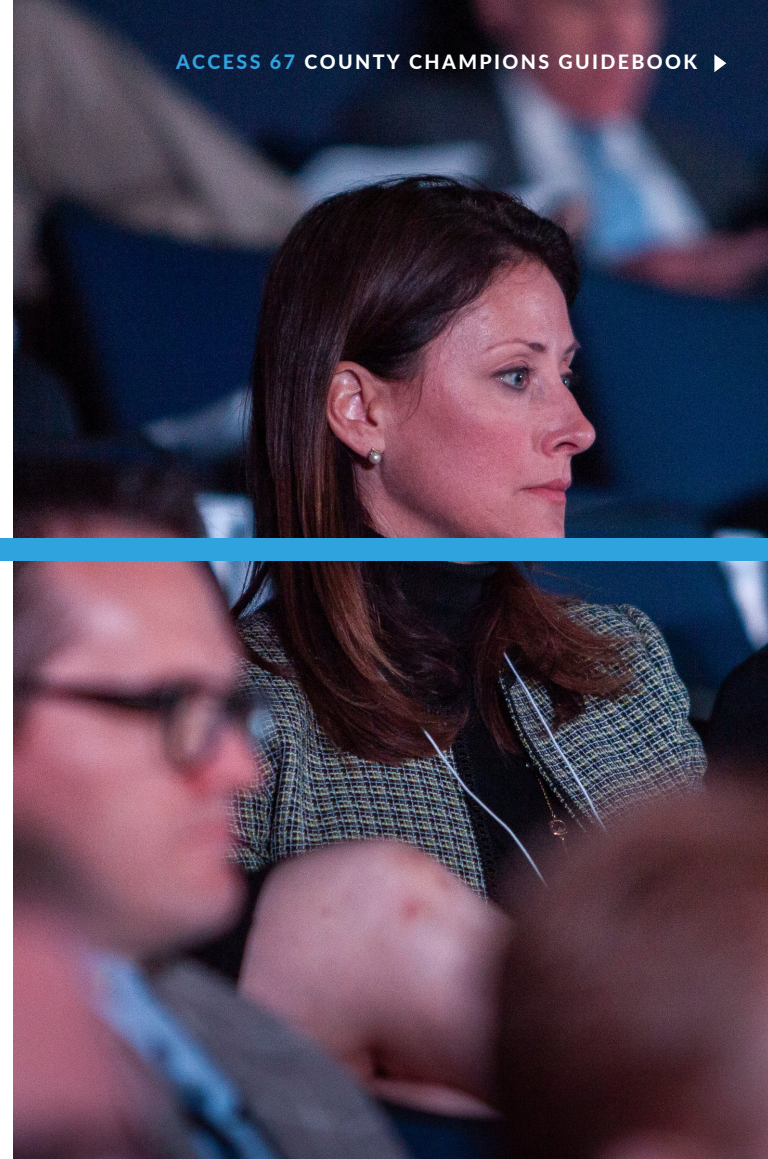
Tray Washington
Washington County



The Presidential Select Committee on Broadband is focused on eliminating the Digital Divide in Florida by implementing a comprehensive approach to deliver affordable and reliable, high-speed Broadband Internet to all Floridians. The Select Committee will coordinate FAC's ACCESS 67 Initiative to:

“ADVOCATE, COLLABORATE, EDUCATE

- **Advocate** for the adoption, as well as, the implementation of state and federal policies that contribute to the development of solutions that address the lack of ACCESS in our local communities.
- **Collaborate** with key stakeholders who share a common goal in developing solutions to address the lack of ACCESS in our local communities.
- **Educate** our members with local solutions by sharing best practices among Florida's counties and similar communities and organizations from around the country.



The purpose of this document is to assist counties in understanding ACCESS 67 Broadband Initiative; provide direction for ACCESS 67 County Champions in establishing Local Technology Planning Teams; and, to help your county answer the following questions:

- What are your goals?
- Who is leading the charge?
- What are your needs?
- What are your assets?
- Who are your partners?
- What are the resources needed to deliver affordable, reliable, high-speed Internet?

FAC IN ACTION

Last year, FAC began its ACCESS 67 Initiative to implement a comprehensive approach to empower Florida's counties to develop solutions to address the impacts of the lack of ACCESS to critical telecommunication and information technology resources in Florida communities.

This work continues with the Presidential Select Committee on Broadband. Commissioners from each corner of the state, both rural and urban, bring their perspectives to tackling this problem.

FAC hopes to support the Department of Economic Opportunity's Office of Broadband in implementing the provisions of HB 969 passed in the 2020 Legislative Session and HB 1239 passed in the 2021 Legislative Session.

This includes building and facilitating local technology planning teams or partnerships with members representing cross-sections of the community.

In September 2021, FAC and the Select Committee requested each County to identify and designate a commissioner to be the lead county contact for "all things broadband".

- County Champion for broadband will have their "eye on the ball" on current developments to improve internet access.
- ACCESS 67 County Champions will encourage the use of broadband, especially in the rural, unserved, and underserved communities of the state.
- Each county should designate a county staff person that will assist their local effort in matters related to the ACCESS 67 Broadband Initiative.
- FAC staff will regularly communicate with the ACCESS 67 County Champions on news, state & federal legislative updates, and coordinate with the Office of Broadband.
- FAC will keep a communication network consisting of the designated County Champions and the supporting staff person to facilitate collaboration with stakeholders, both private and public.



ACTION ALERTS

FAC ACCESS 67 BROADBAND INITIATIVE ACTION ITEMS

01

Appoint an ACCESS 67 County Champion

- Commissioner appointed by the Board or Board Chair
- Designee will be the FAC contact for “all things broadband” in the county
- Additionally, a lead staff liaison should be appointed to support the County Champion (Commissioner) in spearheading the local effort, such as the County Manager/Administrator or high-level staff

02

Adopt a local resolution in support of ACCESS 67, expanding broadband access

- FAC has included a template for an ACCESS 67 Broadband resolution
- The resolution builds upon resolutions adopted last year
- The resolution captures the concepts championed in the NACo Broadband Task Force report, collaboration with DEO & Internet Service Providers, and challenges facing Florida’s counties.

03

Encourage your County Champion, staff, local stakeholders to participate in the DEO Local Technology Planning Team (LTPT) Process

- LTPTs are not mandatory; however, they are structured for information sharing and collaboration within the local community and region.
- The LTPT’s are intended to include a cross-section of the community and those appointed should represent the various sectors seeking enhanced access to the internet.
- Additional information on LTPT members is included in this document

Then, start the LTPT process:

- Initiate a meeting of the LTPT members to begin a discussion and self-evaluation of internet access and capacity.
- If your county has already performed a feasibility study or is moving forward with a Broadband plan, send your plan to FAC staff and DEO’s Office of Broadband. **These plans are essential for the development of the statewide strategic plan.**

COLLABORATION

EVERY FLORIDIAN MUST HAVE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE, HIGH-SPEED INTERNET

The Florida Association of Counties is supporting the expansion of internet services throughout the State of Florida and the efforts of the Department of Economic Opportunity's Office of Broadband. This includes stakeholder collaboration in small, medium, and large counties, both rural and urban.

In September 2021, FAC and the Select Committee requested each County to identify and designate a commissioner to be the lead county contact for "all things broadband".

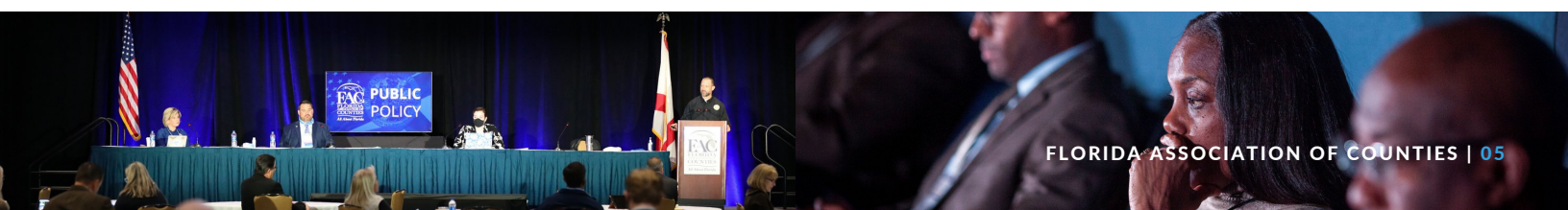
In 2020, FAC supported the Florida Legislature in passing HB 969 creating an Office of Broadband. Under sections 288.9961, 288.9962, and 288.9963, Florida Statutes, the Office of Broadband is responsible for:

- Developing, marketing and promoting broadband internet services in the state;
- Creating a strategic plan to increase the use of broadband internet services in the state;
- Reviewing and verifying public input regarding transmission speeds and availability of broadband internet services throughout the state;
- Building and facilitating local technology planning teams or partnerships; and
- Participating in the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) proceedings that are related to the geographic availability and deployment of broadband internet in Florida.

- Establishing the Broadband Opportunity Program and rulemaking for the program to award grants to applicants who seek to expand broadband to unserved areas (subject to appropriations).
- Developing a map of broadband internet service availability throughout the state.

In 2021, FAC supported the Florida Legislature in passing HB 1239, the "Florida Broadband Deployment Act of 2021", finding sustainable broadband Internet service to be critical for economic and business development, essential for all residents, and provided resources to develop a state broadband internet service map to identify connectivity gaps to end users. This legislation included a \$1.5 million appropriation to develop a state GIS Broadband Map, a substantial resource in assessing current broadband availability throughout the state in a manner that is consistent with the FCC's new reporting standards. The State Broadband Availability Map must be developed by June 30, 2022.

FAC has stressed that the strategic plan be based on up-to-date and location-specific mapping that identifies broadband internet speeds at a granular, census block level to accurately assess internet access needs of the public and private sector.



LOCAL TECHNOLOGY PLANNING TEAMS

FAC hopes to serve as a vital collaborative partner throughout the development of the state strategic plan including the Local Technology Planning Team (LTPT) process. This includes their local counterparts, such as:

- Libraries
- K-12 education
- Colleges
- Universities
- Local health care providers
- Private businesses
- Community organizations
- Economic development organizations
- Local governments
- Tourism
- Parks and Recreation
- Agriculture

The [DEO Broadband Toolkit](#) serves as an informative template for local governments to enhance expansion of broadband deployment in their region through an internet initiative. The document is a potential blueprint for a local broadband feasibility study.

LTPT DIRECTIVES

- Work with rural communities to help the communities understand their current broadband availability;
- Locate unserved and underserved businesses and residents;
- Identify assets relevant to broadband deployment;
- Build partnerships with broadband service providers;
- Identify opportunities to leverage assets and reduce barriers to the deployment of broadband Internet services in the community; and
- Teams must be proactive in fiscally constrained counties in identifying and providing assistance with applying for federal grants for broadband Internet service.

INITIATE LTPT MEETING

- Engage members to begin a discussion and self-evaluate internet access and capacity.
- Counties that have already implemented assessments or feasibility studies should request stakeholder engagement by creating an inventory addressing the following:
 - o Current broadband availability;
 - o Unserved and underserved areas including businesses and residents;
 - o Existing assets relevant to broadband deployment;
 - o Existing partnerships with broadband service providers;
 - o Existing barriers to the deployment of broadband Internet
- Counties that have not yet begun to implement a coordinated approach to enhancing or expanding internet services should begin a self-assessment to answer the following questions:
 - o What is the current broadband availability?
 - o Where are the Unserved and underserved businesses and residents?
 - o What are the existing assets relevant to broadband deployment?
 - o What are the existing and potential partnerships with broadband service providers? and,
 - o What are the existing barriers to the deployment of broadband Internet services in the community?

SAMPLE AGENDA FOR LTPT

1. Introductions and Role of the Local Technology Planning Team
2. A review of the state legislation and the statutory responsibilities of the Department of Economic Opportunity (Statewide Strategic Plan; Statewide Map; Provide Technical Assistance and Development of Resources)
3. Introduction of each Sector represented on the LTPT - each LTPT member should discuss/present their use of broadband/internet in their respective area:
 - Sector Goals – Policies
 - Sector Leadership/Decision-maker
 - Sector Demand – Target user/User Access
 - Sector Assets – existing services, current funds available, types of technology available, etc.
 - Existing partnerships with broadband service providers; and
 - Barriers to the deployment of broadband Internet services in the community.

4. Plan to develop an Executive Summary of Status of Broadband in the area covered by the LTPT – It is recommended that a summary of the status of the elements needed to achieve broadband access be developed based on the following questions:
 - Introduction
 - Current Availability of Broadband/Internet Access
 - Unserved/Underserved Areas
 - Current and Potential Assets to Support Broadband/Internet Access
 - Current and Potential Partnerships with Providers
 - Barriers to Expansion
 - Immediate and future Needs
5. Technical Assistance and Resources Needed to Move Forward.
6. Future Meetings

SAMPLE LOCAL TECHNOLOGY PLANNING TEAM

Sector:	Qualifier/Purpose:	Examples:
Public Safety	Rapid and Inter-Connectivity	County Sheriff or designee
Libraries	Education & Information Access	County Director of Libraries
K-12 Education	Public Sector -	Superintendent of Schools; School Board Member(s); College/University Representative(s)
Health Care Providers	Telemedicine, Institutional Connectivity	County Department of Health; Hospital/Clinic Representative(s)
Private Business	E-Commerce; Economic Development; Partnerships	Local Business Owners; Chamber of Commerce
Tourism	Vacation Planning & E-Commerce	Tourist Development Organization; Local Attractions
Community Organizations	Outreach Initiatives; Community Presence/Influence	Nonprofits; Community Leaders
Agriculture	Base Industries	Farmers and Co-Ops; Equipment Brokers; Local IFAS Official
Economic Development Organizations	(E-)Commerce	Economic Development Council/Committee Member(s)
Local Governments	E-Governance; E-Government; Infrastructure Initiatives; County Plans	County Administrator; Town/City Representatives; Parks and Recreation; Public Safety & Emergency Services
Parks and Recreation	Infrastructure and Tourism	National/State Park Representative(s)
Local Broadband & Internet Service Providers	Partnerships; Infrastructure Expansion (Last Mile); Funding	Internet Service Providers servicing the county/region
State Agencies	Relevant state agency for broadband development	DEO Office of Broadband; FDOT district representatives

LTPT may also consider additional sectors including, but not limited to: Energy and the Environment (Sustainability), Aviation and Aerospace, as well as Sports and Gaming. **DEO has indicated that Local Technology Planning Teams will have resources available to them to perform their work**, including support from the Office of Broadband, the contents of this Broadband Planning Toolkit, and contact information for other Local Technology Planning Teams around the state to share discussions and planning strategies. Links to planning resources, research, and other materials at the Office of Broadband's webpage can be found at www.FloridaJobs.org/Broadband.

BEST PRACTICES

WEB RESOURCES FOR COUNTY CHAMPIONS

01



DEO Office of
Broadband

02



FCC Form 477: Fixed
Broadband Deployment Map

03



NACo Broadband
Taskforce Report

05



2020 Legislation: HB 969 Broadband Internet
Service by Representatives Ausley and Drake

06



FCC Website

04



NTIA Broadband
Links and Grants

07



2021 Legislation: HB 1239 Broadband Internet
Infrastructure by Representative Tomkow

ADVOCACY

LIMITATIONS OF THE BROADBAND OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

The Broadband Opportunity Program was established to award grants to expand access in unserved areas of the state. While the statute created the program, funding was not provided for the first year.

FAC supports modifications of the program that expand eligibility for underserved areas of the state that allow counties to leverage local, state, and federal funding.

BROADBAND DEFINITIONS

- **Broadband Internet Service:** service offering a capacity for transmission at a consistent speed of at least 25Mbps download and 3Mbps upload
- **Unserved:** area of this state in which there is no provider of broadband Internet service
- **Underserved:** area of this state with capacity of transmission of 100 Mbps upload and 10 Mbps upload

FCC definition of high-speed broadband is 25/3Mbps, this is the current standard. Without 25/3Mbps, an area is “unserved” with high-speed broadband.

Section 2: Grant Recipients

A severe limitation of the grant program is that “grant funds **may not be used** to install or deploy broadband internet service to a geographic area in which broadband internet service is **already deployed by at least one provider.**” This is because every region of the state has “deployed” broadband by one provider. This section renders the grant program ineffective as underserved areas are ineligible and precluded from receiving grant funding; likewise, there is no definition of “geographic area. Section 4 further limits recipients to unserved areas and restricts funding educational institutions or residential or commercial premises. Overall, it is inconsistent with broadband access expansion goals, entrenching incumbent ISP and prohibiting competition by picking “winners and losers”. Local incumbents have no incentive to expand service due to cost, no ROI, and lack of customer density.

Section 8: Funding Restrictions

8(a) Grants cannot be awarded to projects receiving other federal funding. The unintended consequence of this is ineligibility for any geographic area receiving CDBG, right-of-way, transportation, etc. funding. Additionally, Federal Infrastructure Package funding cannot be “leveraged” with state and local funds, and 8(b) Grants are restricted from serving a “retail end user that already has access to broadband.”

BROADBAND GOALS

AFFORDABLE

100/100Mbps symmetrical service achieves goals for telehealth, distance learning, and streaming, which includes a broad swath of underserved rural and urban communities

**Scalability of Speeds
is Essential**

If current trends hold, data needs are expected to increase annually by at least 25% per year

FCC may soon increase its standard beyond 25/3Mbps
[Bi-Partisan Senate letter \(March 2021\)](#)

SAMPLE ACCESS 67 COUNTY RESOLUTION

[Download Microsoft Word Copy](#)

RESOLUTION 21- _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE ____ COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, SUPPORTING THE FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES' ACCESS 67 INITIATIVE FOR AFFORDABLE AND RELIABLE HIGH-SPEED INTERNET THROUGHOUT FLORIDA.

WHEREAS, affordable and reliable, high-speed internet access is essential for Floridians to be prosperous, compete in a global economy, and achieve a high quality of life; and

WHEREAS, affordable and reliable, high-speed internet access is as fundamental as acquiring electricity in the first half of the 20th century; and

WHEREAS, the lack of broadband internet access impacts small, medium, and large counties, both rural and urban; and

WHEREAS, the absence of high-speed internet hinders:

- Equitable educational opportunities for school children and workforce development;
- Access to telemedicine to improve health outcomes without demanding travel and transportation needs;
- Rapid communication between the public and law enforcement agencies;
- Economic competitiveness limiting business investment, job growth, and career opportunities;

WHEREAS, high-speed Internet can be cost prohibitive for many Floridians further accelerating the Digital Divide; and

WHEREAS, affordable internet access includes a digital equity component focused on identifying groups disproportionately impacted by the Digital Divide that contribute to national and local disparities; and

WHEREAS, identifying community needs, assets, and barriers is necessary to meet the goal of universal access to high-speed Internet; and

WHEREAS, local governments, states, and the federal government must leverage resources to deliver cost-effective broadband solutions which provide a return on investment to both the public and private interest; and

WHEREAS, county officials play a crucial role as policymakers, funders, data aggregators, conveners, and partners in pursuing sustainable solutions to broadband access, affordability, and reliability; and,

WHEREAS, the Florida Association of Counties ACCESS 67 initiative seeks to implement a comprehensive approach to empowering counties to develop solutions to address the impacts of the lack of ACCESS to critical telecommunication and information technology resources in Florida communities; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Legislature passed House Bill 969 in 2020 creating an Office of Broadband within the

Department of Economic Opportunity requiring the creation of a strategic plan that has goals and strategies for increasing the use of broadband Internet service in the state; and

WHEREAS, it's critical the strategic plan be based on up-to-date and location-specific mapping that identifies broadband internet speeds at a granular, census block level to accurately assess internet access needs of the public and private sector; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Legislature passed House Bill 1239 in 2021, the "Florida Broadband Deployment Act of 2021", finding sustainable broadband Internet service is critical to economic and business development, essential for all residents, and provided resources to develop a state broadband internet service map to identify connectivity gaps to end users; and

WHEREAS, counties serve a vital role in coordinating Office of Broadband Local Technology Planning Teams with their local counterparts, including: libraries; K-12 education; colleges and universities; local health care providers; private businesses; community organizations; economic development organizations; local governments; tourism; parks and recreation; and agriculture; and

WHEREAS, state restrictions limit opportunities for counties to aggregate the user scale necessary to overcome otherwise cost-prohibitive service opportunities, achievable through public-private partnerships; and

WHEREAS, the National Association of Counties Broadband Task Force report identified specific themes that serve as force multipliers in deploying better and more affordable services, including:

- Defining a modern "minimum standard" of Broadband
- Implementing smart "Dig Once" policies and practices including "rights of way" as public assets
- Testing and deploying fiber, cellular, satellite and other technologies
- Focusing on local community engagement and partnerships
- Tackling the "Homework Gap"
- Removing bans on municipal broadband
- Establishing a national grants/loans clearinghouse
- Regulating broadband as a utility
- Committing to world-leading broadband data and mapping analytics

WHEREAS, deployment of broadband internet technology solutions should be tailored to meet the specific needs of the local community; and

WHEREAS, collaboration between Internet Service Providers and counties will ensure community needs are addressed within acceptable timeframes to best serve their communities.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of _____ County, Florida, as follows:

Section 1. The above recitals are true and correct and incorporated in this Resolution.

Section 2. The ____ County Board of County Commissioners, supports the Florida Association of Counties ACCESS 67 Initiative to implement a comprehensive approach to empowering counties to develop solutions to address the impacts of the lack of ACCESS to critical telecommunication and information technology resources in Florida communities.

Section 3. The ____ County Board of County Commissioners, further supports the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity's Office of Broadband in its effort to achieve access to reliable and affordable, high-speed internet access to every household and business throughout the State of Florida.

Section 4. A copy of this resolution shall be sent to the Florida Association of Counties; the Department of Economic Opportunity's Office of Broadband; the Governor of the State of Florida; the President of the Florida Senate; the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives; and APPROVED and ADOPTED by the Board of County Commissioners of ____ County, Florida on the ____ day of ____, 2021.

Section 5. This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon adoption.

