

From: [Jaime Viloría](#)
To: [Carroll, John \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Digital Divide Review Hearing Agenda Item 3 & 4
Date: Thursday, March 11, 2021 12:25:29 PM

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To the Supervisors in the Public Safety & Neighborhood Services Committee:

My name is Jaime Viloría, a resident and a community organizer in the Tenderloin. I'm writing in support of the resolution to adopt the resolution to Bridge the Digital Divide from the October 2020 Economic Recovery Task Force Report. This is extremely necessary for communities like the Tenderloin who always have been left behind from street cleaning, housing, food security, safety, among others. Now with this pandemic, we've clearly seen how big the digital divide is for the Tenderloin residents because all of a sudden, people had to use technology almost overnight in order to continue to be part of functions of modern society. A great example is this hearing – Tenderloin residents who do not have the technological access or know-how is not able to participate and get their voices heard. How can we say that democracy and civic participation as part of our values when we don't consider ways of making it accessible for people, even through technology?

The benefits of bridging this divide will also be beneficial not only for residents but to the city as a whole – for example, the more access and know-how people have on technology, the easier it is for the city agencies to contact or provide information directly to residents. We can also address different issues through technology – such as online banking, tele-medicine, online communities to address isolation, and even use online translation services for people who may not know English too well (and vice versa). These are only a few examples, but bridging the gap will help in making peoples lives a little better. Technology and the internet has clearly become a necessary part of our lives and we as a city should ensure that everyone is able to use it, especially for a city that touts technological innovation and progressive values.

I urge the supervisors to adopt this resolution and continue working on bridging the digital divide. Not doing so is digital apartheid.

Warmest Regards,
Jaime Viloría
Tenderloin Resident

From: [Leonardo Sosa](#)
To: [Carroll, John \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Digital Divide Hearing
Date: Thursday, March 11, 2021 9:37:20 AM

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Hi John,

My name is Leonardo Sosa and I am the founder and Executive Director for Dev/Mission, which is a non profit organization in San Francisco aimed to train untapped young adults for careers in the tech industry, I have been an advocate for Broadband Adoption and closing the Digital Divide in SF and beyond since 1995 with organizations like Mission Language and Vocational School, Goodwill, One Economy Corporation, and the Mission Economic Development Organization before launching my own non profit to continue to close that gap for K-24 in Affordable Housing Communities in San Francisco: www.devmission.org

I will be at today's hearing but also wanted to bring up the fact that my organization received a Youth Led Refurbishment Program back in 2019 to provide Computers, Tech Support and Digital Literacy Training to Low Income families working alongside Alex Banh from the Digital Equity and Department of Technology.

That grant was not extended back in 2020 and here is an article that I wrote on the Chronicle Open Source: <https://www.sfchronicle.com/opinion/openforum/article/SF-must-focus-on-a-digital-divide-amplified-by-15279253.php?t=4c766b7ac6>

Also Channel 2 KTVU did a story on this issue and how my organization along with the young people that graduate from the program were helping to close the Digital Divide with that grant: <https://www.ktvu.com/news/with-empty-offices-big-tech-called-to-help-bridge-digital-divide-in-san-francisco>

I know it is kind of late to request for me to say a few words today but I still believe that the Board of Supervisors need to hear my story growing up in SF with no internet access nor a computer and no technology training living in the Twin Towers in the Vis Valley Sunnydale Area.

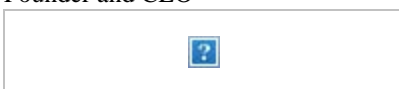
Here are some pics of my work in the past:

MOHCD Grant: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/leonardososa/albums/72157715117769172>

One Economy Digital Literacy

Program: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/leonardososa/albums/72157625114671617>

Leo Sosa
Founder and CEO



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415.572.3947

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www.devmission.org

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From: [Gabriella Ruiz](#)
To: [Carroll, John \(BOS\)](#)
Cc: [Stefani, Catherine \(BOS\)](#); [Haneystaff \(BOS\)](#); [Marstaff \(BOS\)](#); [Safai, Ahsha \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Re: SUPPORT: File# 201373: Urging the Adoption of Sections in the October 2020 Economic Recovery Task Force Report - Bridge the Digital Divide
Date: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 5:26:45 PM
Attachments: [Outlook-hwkil41b.png](#)
[Outlook-gs5z1skr.png](#)
[Outlook-0j3toprr.png](#)
[Outlook-h5tjubsy.png](#)
[Outlook-Facebook.p.png](#)
[Outlook-tndc_logo.png](#)
[Bridge the Digital Divide Safai Local Resolution.pdf](#)

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Dear Clerk and Supervisors of the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee,

Please find attached TNDC's letter to support Supervisor Safai's Resolution in Bridging the Digital Divide. Thank you.

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March 10, 2021

Dear Supervisors of the Committee,

On behalf of Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation (TNDC), I write to express our support for Supervisor Safai's resolution urging the adoption of sections in the October 2020 Economic Recovery Task Force Report, that recommends the city bridge the digital divide.

At TNDC, our organizing and policy work is rooted in supporting Tenderloin residents as they take action on issues they care about. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our department has had to cancel all in-person meetings and events. We quickly adapted and founded the Tenderloin People's Place Group, a Facebook forum where Tenderloin residents can connect and stay up to date on relevant information, access support, and organize to collectively advocate for neighborhood needs. Additionally, we developed the Tenderloin Zoom Network, a series of zoom gatherings that allow staff and resident leaders to facilitate forums where neighbors can connect during this difficult time. In doing this work, our department has had to step up and offer digital literacy and support residents and leaders who were not familiar with the functions of a laptop, emails and zoom.

But despite these efforts, we are still faced with the reality that folks are getting left behind – specifically our low-income communities of color. Neighborhoods like the Tenderloin desperately need more support as we know several of our families, seniors, people with disabilities, and immigrant communities are disproportionately impacted. This has been a voiced concern in our department as soon as the pandemic started, and we have understood our limitations in bridging this gap. **We strongly advocate for dedicated funding to bridge the digital divide in this next budget season.** We understand that programs like Fiber to Housing, experienced budget cuts because of COVID-19, and we hope to see an increase of funding in initiatives that will help make this resolution a reality.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach me at gruiz@tndc.org.

Sincerely,

Gabriella Ruiz

Policy and Planning Manager

pronouns: she/her

gruiz@tndc.org

p 415.358.3955 | c 415.912.0118

Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation

210 Golden Gate Ave | San Francisco, CA 94102

tndc.org



At TNDc, we believe that everyone deserves to thrive. We support tenants and community members in building transformative communities through Homes, Health, and Voice. Together, we can build a future with economic and racial equity. Join us at tndc.org!



March 10, 2021

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Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach me at g Ruiz@tndc.org.

Sincerely,

Gabriella Ruiz
Policy and Planning Manager



From: [Val Langmuir](#)
To: [Carroll, John \(BOS\)](#)
Cc: [Stefani, Catherine \(BOS\)](#); [Haneystaff \(BOS\)](#); [Marstaff \(BOS\)](#); [Safai, Ahsha \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: SUPPORT: File# 201373: Urging the Adoption of Sections in the October 2020 Economic Recovery Task Force Report - Bridge the Digital Divide
Date: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 4:53:53 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image008.png](#)
[image010.png](#)
[image012.png](#)
[201373 Digital Divide - TNDC IT Dir response.pdf](#)

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Dear Clerk and Supervisors,

Please see my public comment letter on Resolution #201373, supporting the city's effort to bridge the digital divide. Please include my comments in the file.

Thanks,

Val Langmuir

Director, Information Technology
pronouns: she/her, they/them

vlangmuir@tndc.org

p 415.417.3091 | c 415.812.3552

Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation

201 Eddy Street | San Francisco, CA 94102

tndc.org



Re: SUPPORT – Resolution No. 201373, Bridge the Digital Divide

Dear Supervisors of the Committee,

On behalf of Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation (TNDC), I write to express our support for Supervisor Safai's resolution urging the adoption of sections in the October 2020 Economic Recovery Task Force Report, that recommends the city pursue economic justice and bridge the digital divide with affordable connectivity and internet service.

Background: TNDC's housing portfolio

For nearly 40 years, TNDC has been preserving and building affordable housing in the Tenderloin and other neighborhoods, serving low-income and working-class communities of color. We own and manage more than 45 buildings (about 3500 units of housing) in San Francisco and about 80% of our households earn less than \$15,000 per year. Many of our residents are systems impacted, having just recently exited homelessness, or require additional support due to barriers they face. TNDC provides supportive services for residents, and about half our buildings are classified as Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH).

Commitment to digital equity, and TNDC practice for resident Internet provision

At TNDC, equity is one of our organizational values and we are committed to bridging the digital divide for the nearly 5,000 residents we serve. Our current policy is to build free Internet into all our buildings as part of the construction process, and to include Internet provision in planned rehabs. We do this either by providing wireless access points throughout the building or by bringing wired Internet into each unit, so that residents need their own router (which the MOHCD has provided on occasion, and for which we are grateful). Wired Internet is preferred by both TNDC and the City, because it is more secure and easier to maintain, resulting in fewer problems and

greater uptime.

Historically, in and around 2016, TNDC applied for and received funding from the CPUC to install free residents' Internet into many of our existing buildings. The first instances of that Internet service were provided on the Community Broadband Network (CBN), and the second batch was provided by Monkeybrains. This was before the [Fiber to Housing](#) (FTH) program, a collaboration between the SF Department of Technology, MOHCD, and Monkeybrains, was officially rolled out.

Since the FTH program was rolled out, TNDC has been an active participant. The FTH program is enabling TNDC to roll out free Internet for residents in our new buildings at opening, and without it, it would be much more costly (and therefore less feasible) for us to do so. It also enabled us to get free residents' Internet added to several more of our existing buildings, at only a nominal cost to TNDC.

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and plans going forward

The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the inequities of the Digital Divide. Internet access is not affordable for many of our residents. The pandemic has forced our community to depend on Internet and technology for schooling and telehealth. This reality has left TNDC more motivated to install free residents' Internet into all our existing buildings, especially PSH, family, and senior buildings. We have a couple of rehabs scheduled, which will include Internet access provision, but that still leaves 14 buildings, comprising 700 units of housing, where free Internet is not provided, and where there is no rehab planned yet. We would like to add Internet to these buildings, most likely in standalone projects funded from capital reserves. We are currently in a discovery phase of this project. We hope to install Internet in 2-3 buildings per year for the next 5 years. To achieve this, we need to find funding from reserves, and we need to include these buildings in the FTH program.

At the same time, because of the pandemic and economic downturn, money is tight, and the FTH program has lost some of its budget allocation. This has put in jeopardy our ability to get all our new builds into the program, let alone the extra rehabs.

Conclusion: TNDC IT Department urges the adoption of resolution # 201373, especially the part related to section 5.5 of the economic recovery report

TNDC relies heavily on the Fiber to Housing (FTH) program to support our residents' Internet, to maintain the current buildings, to include service in new buildings, and to add service to existing buildings until we get to 100% coverage. We greatly appreciate the help we get from the City's MOHCD and SFDT, and from the Internet service provider, Monkeybrains. This program and these organizations enable TNDC to continue to include free Internet service for residents.

TNDC's IT department advocates for increased funding for the FTH program to at least pre-pandemic levels, so that we and other housing providers can continue to include City-provided Internet in our new builds and rehabs. We believe that because of the pandemic, the program needs even more funding than it got before COVID-19. We urge an expansion of the FTH program so that more residents can be served.

Further, TNDC's IT department hopes for the continued partnership of Monkeybrains in the FTH program. Monkeybrains has been a very helpful partner to TNDC, both within and outside the FTH program. Additionally, TNDC's IT department would like to see a meeting between IT leaders at affordable housing providers like TNDC, representatives of the MOHCD, SFDT, and Monkeybrains. We would use this meeting to discuss best practices for provision of Internet to residents, and to explore any ways we can partner to improve Internet provision for low-income residents of San Francisco.

Sincerely,

Val Langmuir

Director of Information Technology

Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation March 10, 2021



Re: SUPPORT – Resolution No. 201373, Bridge the Digital Divide

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Val Langmuir
Director of Information Technology
Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation
March 10, 2021

