Letter from University Presidents and Mayors to President Obama on the Creation of a Metro Lab Network

September 2015

We, the undersigned university presidents and mayors (and their designees), commit to collaborating within and across our communities to research, develop and deploy technology-enabled solutions that can help address our communities’ most pressing challenges.

Our cities and metropolitan areas face complex challenges involving interconnected and interacting infrastructure systems such as transportation, water and sewer, communication, buildings, and public services. Under conventional approaches, addressing these looming challenges will require significant investment.

Our research universities have the physical and human resources to help their cities meet these challenges through undertaking research, development – and deployment – of innovative projects at lower cost. The identification and undertaking of these innovative and deployable projects can best be identified and prioritized through a working partnership between the city and the university that outlines the purpose and process. Many of us are already engaged in these beneficial partnerships.

Any such city/university partnership will exponentially benefit by collaborating with other city/university partnerships similarly organized. Given the complexity of many of the infrastructure city challenges, a comprehensive research, development and deployment approach embracing multiple cities and multiple universities working together collaboratively can offer important advantages.

The formation of an unincorporated network of city/university partnerships, hereinafter referenced as the MetroLab Network, would enable such explicit sharing and collaboration in research development and deployment of solutions to those cities.

Therefore, the undersigned agree to:

Form a City/University collaboration within their respective community memorialized in a Memorandum of Understanding;

Appoint a representative from each partner responsible for maintaining the collaboration; Through the collaboration, identify and undertake at least three research, development and deployment projects within the coming year (by September 2016);

Participate as a founding member of the MetroLab Network through workshops and other knowledge sharing activities.
Sincerely,

G.P. Peterson
President
Georgia Institute of Technology

Kasim Reed
Mayor
City of Atlanta

Mark Becker
President
Georgia State University

Robert J. Sampson
Director, Boston Area Research Initiative
Harvard University

Nigel Jacob
Co-Chair
Mayor’s Office of New Urban Mechanics
City of Boston

Christopher Winship
Co-Director, Boston Area Research Initiative
Harvard University

Rahm Emanuel
Mayor
City of Chicago

Robert J. Zimmer
President
The University of Chicago

Armond Budish
County Executive
Cuyahoga County

Barbara R. Snyder
President
Case Western Reserve University
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Executive Director, Universities at Shady Grove |
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<td>Pete Buttigieg</td>
<td>Rev. John I. Jenkins</td>
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Mayor
City of Minneapolis

Brian Herman
Vice President for Research
University of Minnesota

Chris Coleman
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City of Saint Paul

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Muriel Bowser
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John J. DeGioia
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Georgetown University

Wayne A. I. Frederick
President
Howard University

Leo M. Chalupa
Vice President for Research
The George Washington University

Note: several of the city-university partners that signed this letter made adjustments to the text to meet certain needs. It should not be assumed that the co-signers have agreed to the exact language included in this version of the letter.