NEXT CENTURY CITIES LAUNCHES NATIONWIDE LEADERSHIP SEARCH; EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FRANCELLA OCHILLO TO DEPART THIS SUMMER

Washington, D.C. (May 3, 2023) – Today, after four years at the helm, Francella Ochillo announced that she will move on from her role as Executive Director of Next Century Cities, an organization committed to bringing connectivity within reach for every resident in every community. Its Advisory Board is composed of Rondella Hawkins, Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs Officer for the City of Austin; Aldona Valicenti, outgoing Commissioner/Chief Information Officer with Lexington Fayette Urban County Government; and Coralette Hannon, Director of Livable Communities for AARP Government Affairs. They have decades of experience as public servants and working with local and state officials and will spearhead the search for Francella’s successor.

The members of the Next Century Cities Advisory Board offered the following remarks:

“Francella has been a steadfast and fierce advocate for connecting unserved and underserved communities,” said Advisory Board members Rondella Hawkins, Aldona Valicenti, and Coralette Hannon. “We are so grateful for her strategic leadership and thoughtful stewardship of this organization. Thanks to her efforts, policymakers and allies across the country understand the importance of local expertise in achieving ubiquitous, reliable, and affordable broadband goals for their communities and for our nation.”

Interested applicants with a passion for advocacy-informed strategy and leadership can find more information here or email the search team directly at: edsearch@nextcenturycities.org.

Francella Ochillo, Next Century Cities’ outgoing Executive Director, shared these sentiments:

“I am so grateful for the last four years at Next Century Cities and the opportunity to work alongside such a talented team. Together, and through a pandemic, we proved that the size of our organization could not limit our impact.

“We set out to make digital equity a national priority. We showed up in municipalities to listen to and support local leaders who were too often an afterthought in federal and state broadband policymaking. We knew that closing persistent digital divides would transform forgotten communities. Looking back, our
work to expand broadband access went far beyond deploying infrastructure nationwide. It was about connecting people with possibilities.

“I did what I set out to do and am excited about my next chapter. It is a great time to welcome new leadership for Next Century Cities.”

Since joining Next Century Cities in 2019, Francellla has been recognized as one of the most impactful digital rights advocates in the country. A champion for raising the voices of local officials working to close digital divides in their communities, she empowered on-the-ground leaders with tactical ways to influence federal policy making and state broadband programs. Under her leadership, NCC developed strategies for local governments and community leaders to operationalize once unimaginable goals to connect everyone, everywhere.

Francellla is an attorney who has testified before Congress, served on the FCC’s Consumer Advisory Committee, and advocated for local governments as a member of the FCC’s 2020 Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee’s Disaster Response and Recovery Working Group. She recently completed her Master in Public Administration degree at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government, earned her Juris Doctorate from the University of Illinois Chicago School of Law, and has a Bachelor of Science degree from Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland.

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