

AGENDA ITEM
CITY COUNCIL MEETING DATE - JULY 2, 2013
PRESENTATION

DATE : June 24, 2013

TO : City Manager

FROM : Economic Development Manager

SUBJECT : **REVIEW OF BENICIA INDUSTRIAL PARK BROADBAND ASSESSMENT REPORT AND DISCUSSION OF IMPENDING RELEASE OF RFP/RFI FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A BROADBAND PROJECT**

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive broadband report and presentation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In 2010 the City of Benicia commissioned a comprehensive broadband needs assessment for the Benicia Industrial Park (BIP). That report concluded, among other things, that the internet service was inadequate for many businesses and that the BIP's current and future broadband needs would be best met through a fiber network.

Two years later the City solicited the assistance of Tellus Venture Associates to further assess the BIP broadband infrastructure and outline a solution plan. The proposed solution, or immediate next step, is to release a request for proposals (RFP) or request for information (RFI) soliciting from third parties their approach to improve upon the BIP broadband infrastructure.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

Relevant Strategic Plan Goals and Strategies:

Strategic Issue 3: Strengthening Economic and Fiscal Conditions

- Strategy #2: Strengthen Benicia Industrial Park Competitiveness
- Strategy #3: Retain and Attract Business

BUDGET INFORMATION:

Not applicable at this time.

BACKGROUND:

In 2008 City staff began the process to study and then document the internet/broadband needs of the BIP. This study culminated in a Broadband Needs

Assessment Report that was presented to the City Council in October 2010.

Almost immediately following the presentation the attention of the City turned to address the effects of the Great Recession. The effort to quickly address the BIP broadband deficiencies slowed as attention was focused on resolving declining revenue and budget deficits.

Nonetheless, while the City moved to shore-up its budget, steps were taken towards improving the BIP broadband infrastructure. In 2011 The City became a member of the East Bay Regional Broadband Consortium, a tri-county consortium designed to identify broadband needs and funding for future projects. During the same year the City contracted with Tellus Venture Associates to scope out a broadband project strategy, essentially drafting the process needed from the needs assessment to an actual construction project. Finally, in June of 2012 the City Council earmarked money from the BIP "Intermodal" Account to be used for a broadband project.

On the evening of July 2nd, Steve Blum, President of Tellus Venture Associates will present his report on the existing condition of the BIP broadband infrastructure, noting, among other things, where fiber conduit exists and where lateral lines can be constructed off existing main lines. Furthermore, Mr. Blum will highlight elements of a proposed RFP or RFI.

The paramount goal of the RFP/RFI is to solicit ideas and partnership models by industry professionals rather than dictate a specific outcome, i.e the installation of "x" amount of miles of conduit and fiber. It is the collective recommendation of both City staff and Steve Blum that the City is well served by not limiting its options in the RFP/RFI process. By allowing various models and methods we hope to entice the most creative and feasible project options.

Moving forward, following the presentation to the City Council on July 2nd, staff will work with Tellus Venture Associates to release an RFP/RFI. Upon receipt of the responses, staff will return to the City Council for direction and possible action.

Attachments:

- ❑ Benicia Industrial Broadband Project Assessment (June 24, 2013)
- ❑ Broadband Needs Assessment for the Benicia Industrial Park (September 15, 2010)