AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT
MEETING DATE: June 12, 2012

TITLE: Informational Update on the NCDOT Fiber Optics Project and Possible Support for GIG.U Efforts to Expand Availability of Ultra-Fast Internet Services as an Economic Development Driver

DEPARTMENT: Economic and Community Development	**PUBLIC HEARING: YES or <u>NO</u>**

ATTACHMENTS:
   A. GIG.U Project Information
   B. RFP – GIG.U Broadband Innovation
   C. Article from the New York Times
	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:
	Annette D. Stone 919-918-7319
	Andy Vogel 919-918-7305

PURPOSE:

To provide information to the Board regarding the current NCDOT Fiber Optics project and possible opportunities to collaborate with the local cities, towns, and the GIG.U consortium of universities (UNC, NCSU, and Duke) to provide ultra-fast broadband internet services.

INFORMATION:

Town staff along with UNC staff will discuss the current status of the NCDOT Fiber Optic Project that the Town of Carrboro has been installing in conjunction with a local NCDOT project. Staff will discuss how the fiber optic lines that are currently being installed could be a catalyst for economic development by providing ultra-fast internet services to the community, among other opportunities.

One possible avenue for implementation is a funding opportunity for the local GIG.U consortium from Gigabitsquared (see the attached RFP). According to the attached RFP "Gigabitsquared is a privately held, US based company working in partnership with universities, federal, state, and local governments, as well as public and private businesses to establish and nurture digital ecosystems vital to growth and competition in the 21st Century." Gigabitsquared is seeking proposals for implementation of small areas of broadband internet service, where they would be the service provider. Proposals will be judged on a competitive basis and awarded to six communities across the country.

Another possible avenue would be for the GIG.U consortium to send out RFP's to possible service providers and let those company's make proposals to the consortium on ways to deploy and manage an area-wide broadband internet system.

Currently town and university staff are beginning to have discussions regarding the need for data collection including mapping of the infrastructure that is being built, possible service areas, and the economic development and social impact (digital divide) considerations.

Staff is seeking Board input on what are the priorities for deploying a broadband internet service might be.

FISCAL IMPACT:

To be determined

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept report.