



Legislation Text

File #: 14-0159, **Version:** 1

TITLE:

Work Session on NCNGN-AT&T Master Network Development Agreement

PURPOSE: The purpose of this item is for the Board of Aldermen to receive an overview of the North Carolina Next Generation (NCNGN) Master Network Development Agreement with AT&T for further discussion.

DEPARTMENT: MO-IT

CONTACT INFORMATION: Andy Vogel, 919-918-7305

INFORMATION: North Carolina Next Generation Network (NCNGN) represents a regional effort by six municipalities (Cities and Towns of Carrboro, Chapel Hill, Cary, Durham, Raleigh and Winston-Salem) and four universities (UNC Chapel Hill, North Carolina State University, Duke University, and Wake Forest University/Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center) to work with current and potential network service providers to enhance economic and educational development and address the digital divide by accelerating the deployment of ultra-high-speed broadband network and internet access. The Towns of Carrboro, Chapel Hill and the University of North Carolina have worked closely in support of these efforts.

NCNGN, through the Triangle J Council of Governments, issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) in February 2013 inviting vendors to submit proposals to develop a next-generation ultra-high-speed broadband network. Eight responses to the RFP were received and evaluated by NCNGN subcommittees. AT&T was one of the respondents to the NCNGN RFP.

Negotiations between NCNGN, on behalf of the municipalities and universities, and AT&T have resulted in a Master Network Development Agreement. AT&T is proposing a demand based network build out, in the NCNGN communities that will be able to deliver speeds up to 1 gigabit per second, TV and voice services through AT&T U-verse with GigaPower.

AT&T has also offered the potential for community benefits that could address some digital inclusion goals expressed by the Town of Carrboro and other NCNGN communities, as well as a potential for economic development.

Potential community benefits across all six communities include:

- Provide free broadband of up to 3 mbps to residents of up to 10 qualified affordable housing apartment complexes serving low-income households in the NCNGN area;
- Provide free AT&T U-verse with GigaPower at up to 100 community broadband sites selected by NCNGN;
- Provide options for public Wi-Fi hotspots; and

- Deploy an all-fiber network at up to 100 business buildings.

Generally, higher broadband connection speeds can open up new possibilities for job creation by technology innovators and businesses, as well as new opportunities for consumers who want faster speeds for surfing, shopping, business, gaming, and networking. High speed broadband can also improve educational opportunities and expand access to educational resources. The General Assembly of North Carolina House Bill 44 (H44 S.L. 2013-12) - Transition to Digital Learning in Schools is a specific example of this need for high speed broadband connectivity in NC communities.

At this evenings meeting, representatives from NCNGN - Elise Kohn, Senior Advisor & NCNGN Program Director, AT&T - Walter Wells, Project/Program Management - Community Outreach and UNC Chapel Hill - Stan Waddell, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Infrastructure and Operations and Communication Technologies and Chief Technology Officer, will discuss these efforts with the Board of Aldermen and be available to answer questions.

This is a work session item for discussion and no action is required by the Board of Aldermen, but this item could be brought back to the Board for consideration as early as May 20th, 2014.

The Master Network Development Agreement has been included as Attachment A. The agreement in no way grants exclusivity to AT&T in the Town of Carrboro.

FISCAL & STAFF IMPACT:

- AT&T is asking that the Town of Carrboro designate staff to facilitate coordination between AT&T, the Town and Town Departments and other NCNGN Participants; and
- Streamline permitting and inspection processes and applications; and
- Provide best efforts to allow AT&T access to Town rights-of-way and utility easements upon request; and
- Develop and implement community education program regarding benefits of high-speed network and services; and
- Continue existing non-discriminatory policies to treat all broadband Internet service providers in a competitively neutral manner; and
- Consider AT&T for future communications services, subject to applicable procurement laws and regulations.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board receive the overview and discuss the NCNGN-AT&T Master Network Development Agreement