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SUBJECT: Tacoma Tideflats 5G Network Feasibility Study Report
DATE: January 25, 2022

PRESENTATION TYPE:
Informational Briefing

SUMMARY:

In June, 2021 staff along with Washington Maritime Blue and the 5G Open Innovation Lab provided an information briefing to the Economic Development Committee (“EDC”) regarding preliminary discussions of “Smart Port” enhancements through innovative data solutions (private 5G networks and edge computing). Subsequently a public-private partnership was formed to complete a Feasibility Study to determine whether supply chain, safety, environmental and economic benefits would result from these types of innovations and how best to move forward if sufficient benefits were identified. This Report will inform the EDC about the results of the study.

BACKGROUND:

The Feasibility Study engaged core stakeholders to understand priorities and benefits to be achieved by the digitization of transportation, real time awareness of the port area, just-in-time arrival of vessels and lower carbon emissions due to shorter waiting times at port calls. Individual interviews as well as workshops were held both virtually and in-person. Participants included the Port of Tacoma, Manufacturing Industrial Council, terminal operators, trucking companies, Port tenants, entrepreneurs, the University of Washington and others. In total, 78 stakeholders were engaged including the Pacific Northwest National Lab and technology company representatives from Microsoft, T-Mobile, Ericsson, Intel and others, who reviewed the identified use cases and provided expert support.

ISSUE:

Four key themes for the Tacoma Tideflats emerged: 1) orchestration and efficiency; 2) infrastructure modernization; 3) safety improvements; and 4) enabling a sustainable future. Included in these themes were 160 project ideas, refined and prioritized in workshop exercises. The study also developed a plan for a Proof of Concept pilot for a private 5G edge computing network and innovation lab as well as subsequent implementation steps should the pilot prove successful. Technical aspects for deployment of the network were also identified.

ALTERNATIVES:

This is an information briefing only. There are no alternatives presented.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This is an information briefing only. There is no fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION:

This is an information briefing only. There is no recommendation.