

KING COUNTY AUDITOR'S OFFICE

June 14, 2018

Enhanced-911 Final Follow-Up

TO:

Metropolitan
King County
Councilmembers

FROM:

Kymber Waltmunson,
County Auditor

The King County E911 Program Office implemented our audit recommendations to develop a governance process, agree on a financial baseline, and jointly plan for Next Generation 911 technology through a two-year strategic planning process. As we recommended in 2015, the E911 Program Office and its Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) partners concluded an intensive strategic planning process that laid the groundwork to address the financial challenges facing the regional system in December 2017. This process brought diverse stakeholders to the table and resulted in greater transparency and accountability, as well as key decisions on how to implement Next Generation 911 technology.

The E911 Program Office and PSAP partners have not yet determined how to ensure financial sustainability past 2023. Through implementing our recommendations, regional E911 stakeholders took a critical step toward establishing collaborative relationships and sharing information. The strategic plan requires decisions on how to reduce spending across the E911 system as early as June 2018, when the 2019-20 budget proposals are due. Further, the plan lays out a wide range of possible budget scenarios, culminating in a revenue gap that still needs to be resolved of \$26 to \$67 million over a 10 year period. Stakeholders will need to build on the results of the audit recommendations—a governance mechanism, financial baseline, and technology plan—to navigate a path to financial sustainability for the regional E911 system.



King County

Of the three audit recommendations:

3
DONE**Fully implemented**Auditor will no longer
monitor.0
PROGRESS**Partially implemented**Auditor will continue to
monitor.0
OPEN**Remain unresolved**Auditor will continue to
monitor.

Please see below for details on the implementation status of these recommendations.

Recommendation 1

DONE 

The County Executive should create a governance mechanism that builds on the County Council-directed strategic planning group. This group should balance King County's statutory responsibilities under Washington state law with providing a formal, clear, and transparent mechanism for the Public Safety Answering Points and other regional partners to participate in the decision-making process.

STATUS UPDATE: In December 2017, King County E911 Program Office completed its work with Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) and other stakeholders to develop a Regional E911 Strategic Plan. The plan established a governance process that included creating a governing board to advise the E911 Program Office comprised of one voting position for each PSAP. The plan espouses decision-making by consensus where possible, but also provides a detailed process for decisions and appeals.

By implementing this recommendation and creating a formal advisory group and process for decision-making, the E911 Program Office and PSAP stakeholders will have a structure in place to efficiently identify a path to financial sustainability while meeting the service needs of King County customers.

Recommendation 2

DONE 

The Enhanced 911 Program Office should collaborate with stakeholders to agree on a financial baseline of required spending and estimated revenues. It should implement a systematic and documented process to regularly update the baseline as elements change, and communicate updates with stakeholders.

STATUS UPDATE: Part of the strategic planning process mentioned above was to develop a sustainable financial plan. While the details of the plan have not yet been determined, stakeholders agreed on a financial baseline. After completing an extensive review of the E911 Program Office budget, E911 program leaders shared a baseline budget model with PSAP partners that they can use to project impacts of proposed financial strategies. In addition, the decision-making process provided in the governance structure requires information sharing between the Program Office and PSAPs.

Through the process of implementing this recommendation, the Program Office increased transparency and contributed to building a foundation of shared understanding of E911 finances.

Recommendation 3

DONE 

The Enhanced 911 Program Office should suspend projects intended to support or implement Next Generation 911 until it has created a Next Generation 911 implementation plan and vetted this plan with stakeholders.

STATUS UPDATE: As we reported in the [previous follow-up](#), the E911 Program Office suspended all Next Generation 911 projects except the text-to-911 project. That project is in its final phases, and

E911 Program leaders anticipate that text-to-911 capability will be available in fall 2018. As part of the strategic planning process, the E911 Program Office and PSAPs collaboratively developed a technology investment strategy based on a single platform network architecture design that will guide the region to prioritize its efforts to enhance 911 efficiency and service delivery. This strategy fulfills the recommendation to create a Next Generation 911 implementation plan.

As a result of the efforts the E911 Program Office and PSAPs made in developing the technology strategy, stakeholders achieved greater clarity on objectives, actions, and targets for a system that will meet the current and future needs of 911 users in King County.

Laina Poon, Principal Management Auditor, conducted this review. Please contact Laina at 206-477-1045 if you have any questions about the issues discussed in this letter.

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