



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 21, 2021

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of a Joint City of Alexandria and Arlington County Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG 9-1-1) Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) Project.

ISSUE: Consideration of Collaboration between the City of Alexandria and Arlington County in regard to a Next Generation 9-1-1 Computer Aided Dispatch System (CAD).

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council endorse the City of Alexandria's participation in the joint City of Alexandria and Arlington County Next Generation 9-1-1 Computer Aided Dispatch System project.

BACKGROUND: Next Generation (NG) 9-1-1 is an Internet Protocol-based system that allows digital information (e.g., voice, photos, videos, text messages) to flow seamlessly from the public, through the 9-1-1 network to emergency responders. NG 9-1-1 will benefit the residents, visitors, and businesses of the City of Alexandria and the National Capital Region (NCR) by enhancing call delivery resiliency and reliability; creating network redundancy and diversity; enabling real-time photo and video transmissions; and improving call transfer capabilities across jurisdictions. Purposeful implementation of NG 9-1-1 will maximize the region's continued commitment to timely and effective delivery of interoperable 9-1-1 service.

In September 2019, the City of Alexandria and Arlington County successfully implemented a joint NG 9-1-1 phone system focusing on inoperability and improving efficiency in the handling of 9-1-1 calls in order to improve operational standards and increase public safety in the region. This single integrated system which was jointly planned, procured, installed and operated provides both jurisdictions the ability to receive and process their respective 9-1-1 (emergency) and 10-digit (non-emergency) telephone calls from either jurisdiction's primary and backup 9-1-1 center. In addition, both jurisdictions have the ability to receive and answer each other's 9-1-1 and 10-digit telephone calls when either is unable to do so, such as during a system/facility failure or 9-1-1 center facility emergency.

The CAD system is the main software and hardware that provides first responders the ability to quickly and effectively respond to a call for service. The CAD system is also used to store incident information and assist in determining the optimal response while providing dispatch and ongoing incident management support. With the increased use of advanced telecommunication technologies, critical infrastructure investments are required for 9-1-1 systems to remain effective. A NG 9-1-1 CAD system will retain legacy functions and will provide new capabilities such as enhanced caller location accuracy, better coordination of records management and better data analysis information.

The City of Alexandria originally purchased the current CAD system in 2014 and implemented in 2015 and nearing the end of its useful life. The City's Department of Emergency & Customer Communication (DECC) and Arlington County's Department of Public Safety and Communications and Emergency Management (DPSCEM) recently conducted technology assessments of their respective CAD systems to identify issues and develop recommendations that would facilitate continued delivery of timely, high-quality call-taking and dispatch services. The result of these assessments was that Arlington and Alexandria should update to a joint CAD system.

DISCUSSION: The NCR has established goals for jurisdiction to continue coordinated collaborations among their regional partners that will help the NCR move NG 9-1-1 technology services forward in an intelligent, integrated, and interoperable fashion. The City of Alexandria and Arlington County staff members are currently developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the planning, design, procurement, installation, configuration, operation, and lifecycle management of a joint CAD system to support the NCR goals. The MOU will also detail the processes involved for staff members from both jurisdictions to handle operational issues, system ownership, financial processes, and identifies inter-jurisdictional working groups in order to communicate issues in a transparent and accountable format.

Both jurisdictions are working together on a solution that will meet both jurisdictional and regional goals. While collaboration with Arlington is not new to the City, having two large jurisdictions jointly procure and operate a single CAD system is unusual. This will be accomplished by implementing a single but separate solution that will provide Next Generation capabilities providing both jurisdictions with the ability to receive and answer calls along with enter information into one CAD and dispatch to that jurisdiction.

The City has been committed to move forward to support an interoperable regional NG 9-1-1 system and is excited to collaborate with Arlington County once again to achieve and maintain maximum levels of public safety interoperability.

FISCAL IMPACT: The City has allocated \$7.9 million in the adopted FY 2022 to FY 2031 Capital Improvement Program to fund on-going improvements of the CAD system. This collaboration will provide both jurisdictions cost-saving opportunities in software acquisition, training, and implementation resources. Funding, if needed beyond the \$7.9 million amount is subject to appropriation consideration by the governing bodies of Alexandria and Arlington.

STAFF:

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