

**Eastside Regional Public Safety Communications Center Initiative:  
August 2005 Update**

For Immediate Communication with Dispatch Center Staff and  
Interested Police, Fire and EMS Employees

***What is the Eastside Regional Public Safety Communications Center Initiative?***

The initiative is a collaborative effort between 8 cities and 5 fire districts/agencies to explore the feasibility of creating a new joint public agency to oversee and operate a regionalized dispatch center to serve police, fire and emergency service providers.

The Initiative was launched in 2004 by 5 cities (Kirkland, Mercer Island, Bellevue, Medina, Clyde Hill) and the Woodinville Fire and Life Safety District. An initial feasibility study completed in June 2004 found considerable common ground between those jurisdictions regarding the benefits and challenges of pursuing a regionalized dispatch agency.

A second phase of work is now underway on the Initiative. By the end of 2005, the goal is to have an agreed upon governance model and business plan.

There are now thirteen (13) jurisdictions participating in the project:

City of Bellevue	City of Redmond Fire
City of Clyde Hill	Woodinville Fire and Life Safety District
City of Kirkland	Shoreline Fire District
City of Medina	Northshore Fire District
City of Mercer Island	Eastside Fire and Rescue
City of Bothell	Fall City Fire District 27
City of Issaquah	

In addition, the Washington State Patrol is considering participating in some way, and the King County Sheriff's Department is actively monitoring the Initiative. Additional jurisdictions are welcome to participate.

***Why are we exploring the option of a regional dispatch center?***

The benefits of regionalized dispatch, depending on how it is structured, could include:

- Increased efficiencies and economies scale
- Reduced costs overall
- Improved funding opportunities
- Higher levels of service
- Greater "voice and vote" for those agencies receiving dispatch service in operating, financial and governance decisions

***What would the new agency look like and when would it be created?***

If implemented, the project would involve the consolidation of some of the multiple independent public safety dispatch operations now operating in North East King County. *Whether* the project proceeds to implementation, *who* would be involved, *how* it would happen, *when* it would happen, and *where* it would happen are all issues that are *not yet decided*. All these issues are being examined in this current phase II work, which will be completed in 2005. If the project does proceed to implementation, the consolidation of dispatch agencies is not anticipated to begin any sooner than three years after this phase of the work is completed.

***What has happened on the Initiative in the last two months?***

The Steering Committee met on June 17 and again on July 15.

At the June 17 meeting, the group confirmed initial membership and meeting dates for four subcommittees. These subcommittees are working over the summer to develop further detailed proposals for the Steering Committee to review. The subcommittees and their Chairpersons are:

- **Governance and Finance** subcommittee (Chair: Chief Marcus Kragness, Shoreline Fire District)
- **Law Enforcement Dispatch** subcommittee (Chair: Captain Greg Edwards, Kirkland Police Department)
- **Fire/EMS Dispatch** subcommittee (Chair: Chief Tim Fuller, Redmond Fire Department)
- **Technology/Facilities/Operations** subcommittee (Chair: Brenda Cooper, Kirkland Information Technology Director)

Also at the June 17 meeting, the Steering Committee reviewed how some other regionalized public safety agencies are structured, in order to understand the range of issues that have to be decided in developing a governance model for this Initiative. Agencies reviewed included EPSCA (the Eastside Public Safety Communications Agency), SNO PAC (a regionalized police, fire and EMS dispatch agency serving most of Snohomish County) and ValleyCom (a regionalized police, fire and EMS dispatch agency serving South King County cities and fire districts).

Also at the June 17 meeting, the consultant team identified four issues that should be resolved sooner rather than later in the project: inclusion or exclusion of records management services in the scope of the new agency; whether to include subscribers as well as owners in the new agency; the degree of separation of the fire, EMS and police dispatch functions; whether any other functions should be included in the agency mission. No decision has been made yet on any on these issues.

It was agreed that before the Steering Committee decides whether to incorporate 800 MHZ radio system ownership and maintenance into its scope of services, the EPSCA

board needs to discuss the idea, since EPSCA currently provides this service to most of the jurisdictions participating in the Initiative.

The meeting concluded with an hour-long small group exercise to discuss issues of mission, operations, governance and finance.

Later in June, each jurisdiction participating in the Initiative was asked to complete a lengthy survey regarding their preferences on various issues about mission, operations, governance and finance of a new dispatch agency. The results of these surveys are posted on the Initiative website <http://www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/depart/cmo/eastsidedispatch.htm> .

The survey results show strong consensus between the jurisdictions on the vast majority of issues and ideas surveyed.

At its July 15 Steering Committee meeting, the group reviewed more options for how other areas of the state and the Northwest have chosen to regionalize dispatch agencies. Included in this review were CENCOM (a regionalized public safety dispatch agency serving all of Kitsap County, its cities and fire districts), CRESA (a regionalized public safety dispatch agency serving all of Clark County, Washington and its cities and fire districts), and WCCA (a regional dispatch agency serving Washington County, Oregon its cities and fire districts).

Also at the July 15 meetings, the four subcommittees reported on their discussions to date.

### ***What is Happening Next?***

To get additional feedback, learn first-hand about specific issues from 9-1-1 call receivers and dispatchers, and answer questions, the consultant team will meet with staff at the dispatch centers in Issaquah, Bellevue, Kirkland and Bothell, in August and early September.

A draft Statement of Values and Principles, which will be used to guide detailed development of a governance model, has been crafted and is being circulated for comment; it will be presented for discussion and possible approval at the September Steering Committee meeting.

Representatives from ValleyCom will meet with interested participants on September 1 to answer questions about how that agency is structured and operated.

The Steering Committee is scheduled to meet again on September 16.

For further information, see the project website at <http://www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/depart/cmo/eastsidedispatch.htm> .

The contact person for **(insert jurisdiction name)** is **(Name)** **(phone number)**.

*Additional regular communications will be forthcoming, approximately monthly, to keep you informed about the progress of the study effort.*