

**Eastside Regional Public Safety Communications Center Initiative:
June 2005 Update to Staff**

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

What is the Eastside Regional Public Safety Communications Center Initiative?

This project was initiated last year by 5 cities (Kirkland, Mercer Island, Bellevue, Medina, Clyde Hill) and the Woodinville Fire and Life Safety District to explore the potential for a regional approach to police, fire and EMS 9-1-1 call answering and dispatch in East King County. An initial study completed in June 2004 found that there was considerable common ground among the jurisdictions regarding the benefits and challenges of pursuing the idea.

A second phase of work is underway regarding the possible creation (not sooner than 2008) of a new, joint agency to oversee and operate a regionalized police/fire/EMS dispatch center in East King County. There are now thirteen (13) jurisdictions participating in the project:

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

In the last month, two additional City public safety agencies have joined (they are included in the list above): the City of Bothell—both police and fire departments are now participating, and the Redmond Fire Department has also joined the effort. 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 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 before 2008 at the earliest.

What has happened on the project in the last month?

In addition to securing two additional partners on the project, as noted above, the participants have agreed on the following items:

- A decision-making structure to guide the phase II work. A Steering Committee with representatives from all participating agencies will guide the effort. There will be four subcommittees created composed of staff of the participating agencies.
- A communications plan to keep interested parties informed about the project (it includes agreement to issue monthly updates to employees, such as this).
- A project timeline, identifying approximately start and stop dates for the phase II work.

These items are posted on the project website, together with minutes of recent Steering Committee meetings, at <http://www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/depart/cmo/eastsidedispatch.htm> .

Participating agencies are now identifying staff to serve on four subcommittees that will assist with data gathering and developing recommendations. Participating agencies have also been asked to identify internal contact staff for the project—a person or persons to whom employee ideas and questions may be directed.

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.