

**North - East Regional Public Safety Communications Center Initiative:
October 2005 Update**

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

What is the North-East 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 thirteen (13) jurisdictions participating in the project: *See below* for list of participants and more background information.

What has happened on the Initiative in the last month?

The Steering Committee (consisting of representatives from all participating jurisdictions) has heard a presentation from the Consultant Team (Mark Nelson and Karen Reed) reporting on the feedback they heard from dispatch staff in Bellevue and Kirkland regarding the project. Given the importance of addressing the concerns and questions raised by employees, a new subcommittee has been formed for Human Resource Issues; dispatch staff representatives will serve as resources to this committee, which is expected to have its first meeting in November.

The Steering Committee also reviewed the conceptual governance proposal from the Governance and Finance Subcommittee; it was well received, with minor comments and questions. The Subcommittee and Consultant Team will now work to turn the conceptual proposal into a draft interlocal agreement.

The Subcommittee endorsed the recommendation from the Technology/Facilities/Operations subcommittee that the new agency, if formed, should use an integrated CAD/RMS and Records system (but not necessarily use a single vendor for these three systems).

The Police Dispatch and Fire/EMS Dispatch Subcommittees continue to work through details of services they would like to see the Agency provide; there is a growing consensus that the Agency should host some sort of centralized records system , but with individual departments/agencies being responsible for input of records and data, and appropriate security provisions regarding who can access records.

The Steering Committee also reviewed some comparative cost and size information regarding other regional dispatch facilities – ValleyCom, CENCOM (Kitsap County) and Spokane County.

Finally, the Steering Committee discussed the fact that alternative facilities costing information is unlikely to be completed this year, and thus costing of a proposed new Agency can not be completed this year, given the importance of a facility choice to that cost calculation. The schedule issues will be discussed again next month.

What is Happening Next?

The Steering Committee will next meet on November 18. At that meeting, there will be a presentation regarding a potential user fee proposal and options regarding financing of debt. More information regarding staffing levels of current dispatch operations will also be presented, as well as further discussion of issues that will need to be carried over to 2006 for completion.

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

Additional Background Information:

Who is participating in the Initiative?

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

In addition, the Washington State Patrol and King County Sheriff's Department are monitoring the Initiative and attending some of the meetings. The State Patrol, Sheriff, and 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 or early 2006. If the project does proceed to implementation, the consolidation of dispatch agencies is not anticipated to begin before 2008 at the earliest.

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.