



## King County

### Metropolitan King County Council

#### Regional Policy Committee

#### Staff Report

**Agenda Item No.:** 6  
**Name:** Beth Mountsier & Clifton Curry  
**Briefing No.:** 2014-B0194  
**Date:** December 10, 2014  
**Attending:** Dianne Carlson, Director of Regional Initiatives, Office of the Executive  
Marlys Davis, E911 Office Program Manager

#### SUBJECT

Current Status and Recent Council Actions Related to the county's Enhanced 911 System and Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs).

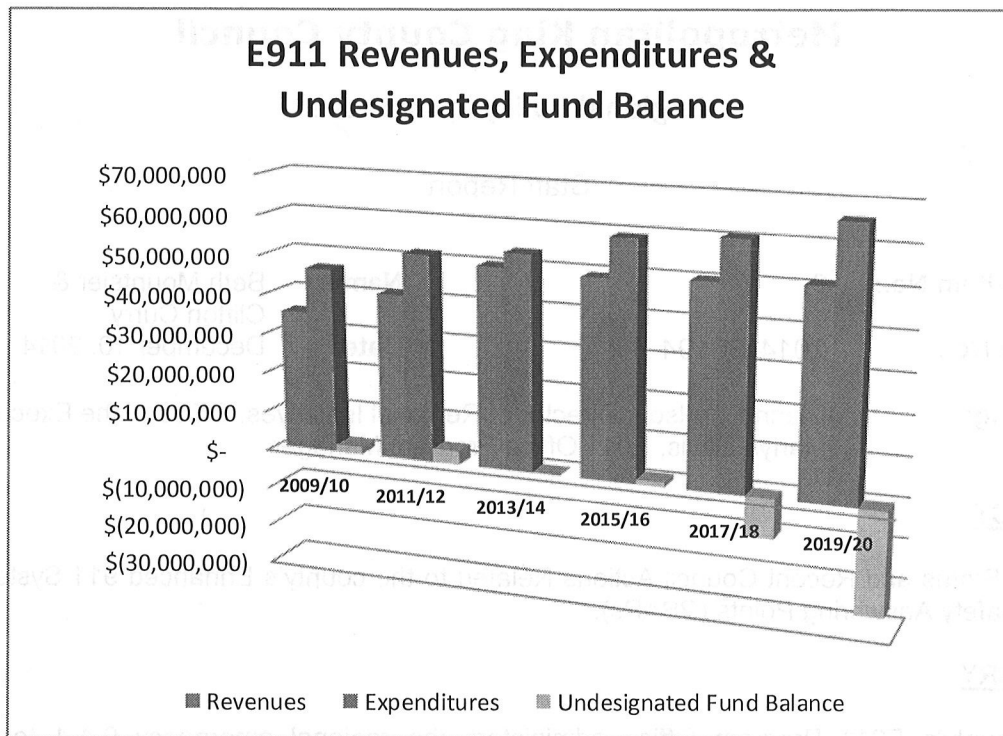
#### SUMMARY

King County's E911 Program Office administers the regional emergency 9-1-1 telephone system in the county. In partnership with the twelve call centers in King County, the office helps provide 9-1-1 service to the entire county. "Enhanced" refers to the fact that the 911 system includes the capability to selectively route incoming 911 calls to the appropriate Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) operating in a defined 911 service area in order to dispatch emergency responders. The E911 office works with all PSAPs or 911 dispatch centers to ensure that equipment and technology is state of the art for the provision of 911 emergency response services throughout the county. The briefing will describe the current status of the of the county's 911 system and council actions for improving oversight.

#### BACKGROUND

The King County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) includes two programs: Emergency Management and the Enhanced 911 (E911) Programs. The county's E911 Program Office administers the regional emergency 9-1-1 telephone system in King County. In partnership with the twelve call centers in King County, the office helps provide 9-1-1 service to the entire county. The E911 Program Office also administers funds that are collected in accordance with state statute and distributed to counties from various telephone excise taxes. The E911 program is supported by these excise taxes. There are excise taxes for land line phones (Switched Access), wireless (Wireless Access and Wireless Prepaid), and Voice-over-Internet (VoIP Access). These revenues directly support the county's E911 program and a portion of the revenues are distributed to the PSAPs to defray the costs of 911 call handling (PSAPs are responsible for the costs of dispatching and other operations.)

Revenue from these sources has not kept pace with expenditures, thereby reducing fund balances. The following chart shows the E911 revenues expenditures and undesignated fund balances since 2009-2010.



While the Executive's proposed budget estimates that there is sufficient fund balance and revenues to support all 911 operations during the biennium, it appears that in the 2017-2018 biennium there will not be sufficient fund balance to maintain all of the E911 programs. Additionally, it appears that the 2015-2016 proposed budget relies upon approximately \$10 million in fund balance in order to balance revenues and expenditures. The financial plan projects an ending fund balance of \$1.2 million for 2015-2016 and a shortfall of \$9.9 million for 2017-2018.

"Enhanced" refers to the fact that the 911 system includes the capability to selectively route incoming 911 calls to the appropriate one of twelve Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) operating in a defined 911 service area in order to dispatch emergency responders. The E911 office works with all PSAPs or 911 dispatch centers to ensure that equipment and technology is state of the art for the provision of 911 emergency response services throughout the county.

The E911 office is also responsible for the transition to what is known as Next Generation 911 (NG911), which is intended to modernize existing, land line-based 911 technology and upgrade systems to better work with wireless and Voice-over-Internet (VOIP) technologies. NG911 will allow better access, provide for text/photo/video-to-911, allow for better location identification, and receive automatic collision notification from vehicles and data from medical devices. The federal government is encouraging all 911 systems nationwide to implement these NG911 upgrades.

The Adopted 2012 Budget included resources for the E911 Program, working with its partner agencies, to evaluate the feasibility of consolidating some of the county's PSAPs. King County's E911 system was originally implemented with 27 PSAPs. Over the years, many PSAPs have been consolidated into larger PSAPs, primarily because the costs of operating 24 hours per day became unmanageable for smaller agencies. Today, there are 12 remaining PSAPs within the E911 system, and the county and its partner agencies have recognized that the increased costs of maintaining services and implementing NG911 changes could not be maintained with existing funding sources. The following table shows the number of 911 calls handled in each PSAP for 2013.

### King County 911 Calls 2013

PSAP	911 CALLS	%
Seattle PD	545,070	29%
Valley Com	437,277	23%
King County Sheriff	335,439	18%
WA State Patrol	256,981	14%
NORCOM	164,534	9%
Seattle FD	90,809	5%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1,830,110</b>	<b>97%</b>
Redmond PD	21,169	1%
Bothell PD	15,019	1%
Issaquah PD	11,367	1%
Port of Seattle PD	8,746	0%
Enumclaw PD	4,805	0%
Univ. of WA. PD	2,901	0%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>64,007</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,894,117</b>	

As this table shows, there is a significant variance in the volume of calls handled by each PSAP, six PSAPs handle 97 percent of all 911 calls and the remaining six PSAPs handle just three percent of the total. It is estimated that the county can expect 4.1 million calls by 2021 and that by 2032 the county will have to handle an estimated 4.7 million calls.

King County, with its partner agencies, recognized in 2011 that the increased costs of maintaining services and implementing NG911 changes could not be maintained with existing funding sources (as described above). As a result, the Executive initiated a process to develop options and recommendations to ensure sufficient resources are available for the 911 system into the future.

A PSAP Consolidation Steering Committee, consisting of the directors from each of the twelve PSAPs and police, fire, and EMS representatives, was formed in July 2011. The E911 Program Office, in conjunction with the Steering Committee, developed a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a countywide PSAP Consolidation Feasibility Assessment. GeoComm, a Minnesota-based organization with extensive public safety consulting experience, was selected as the consultant

for this assessment. The vendor began the engagement by documenting the existing condition of the E911 system and the PSAP structure, and then conducted the "Consolidation Feasibility Assessment." GeoComm presented final recommendations in June 2013, identifying different options for PSAP configuration and other system enhancements for further consideration

**2013-14 Proviso** The Adopted 2013-2014 Biennial Budget (Ordinance 17476) included a proviso requiring that the office report on the results of the consultant report and any recommendations for consolidation and report on its work in May 2013. However, the work group had not come to any final conclusions related to consolidation at the time the proviso was due and the Executive requested an extension to the proviso. In addition, the scope of the proviso was changed from reporting on recommendations to reporting on progress and plans for completion.

The report was due to the Council by September 15, 2014 and was transmitted on September 12, 2014. In responding to the proviso, the Executive reports that a PSAP Future Configuration Recommendation Committee was to be formed for the decision-making phase of the process. This committee is intended to consist of policy-makers who will develop recommendations for the future of the E911 system. Members of the PSAP Consolidation Steering Committee would become a Technical Committee to assist the Recommendation Committee.

The Recommendation Committee was intended to analyze potential options identified by GeoComm and also identify and evaluate other viable options before making recommendations and the committee was also intended to develop a transition plan for implementing the recommendations.

The Executive noted that the Recommendation and Technical Committees began meeting in October 2013. The Technical Committee identified 29 options to be considered. The Executive also reported that the Technical Committee had requested that a financial and NG911 technical consultant be engaged to provide additional expertise and support in evaluating the system finances and options. The goal was to have this review completed in March 2015. In addition, the committees were expected to participate in a Strategic Positioning exercise to assist in setting the future direction of the E911 system.

According to plan in the Executive's proviso report, options that the Technical Committee determines to be viable would have been merged into scenarios and forwarded to the Recommendation Committee for consideration. The Technical Committee would also develop an implementation timeline for the proposed scenarios. In addition, E911 policies, such as 911 call routing and PSAP Revenue Distribution, will be reviewed based on the proposed scenarios. It had been anticipated that the Technical Committee would forward their refined proposals to the Recommendation Committee in the summer of 2015, allowing the Recommendation Committee to finalize their recommendations by September 2015. A Final Recommendation Report would have been developed and the recommendations presented to various executive-level committees, including the King County Council, by December 2015.

**2015-2016 Biennial Budget Actions Related to PSAPs** The Executive completed the proviso report with its plans in late summer 2014, prior to the transmittal of the Executive's Proposed 2015-2016 Budget. During the Council's budget deliberations, the Budget Leadership Team reviewed the E911 Fund Balance and the plans for regional PSAP planning (as proposed in the Proviso Report). However, the leadership team also discussed alternative options for reviewing both potential PSAP consolidation and E911 Fund Balance issues.

Based on these deliberations, the Council choose to adopt a different approach to resolving regional PSAP issues. The Council adopted the following proviso as part of the 2015-2016 Budget that would create a new regional PSAP oversight committee:

*Of this appropriation, \$500,000 shall not be expended or encumbered until the executive transmits an ordinance establishing the King County regional public safety answering point oversight committee and the ordinance is adopted by the council. The ordinance shall reference the subject matter, the proviso's ordinance, ordinance section and proviso number in both the title and body of the motion.*

*The ordinance shall include, but not be limited to:*

*A. A description of the purpose, processes and role of the committee relative to recommending a strategic plan for the implementation, governance and operation of the Next Generation 911 system in King County, to include proposed governance structures, operating rules and infrastructure for countywide Enhanced 911 operations; and*

*B. Committee membership including the chair of the council, the vice chair of regional coordination of the council or her successor, the chair of the law, justice, health and human services committee or its successor, the executive, a city of Seattle elected official appointed by the mayor, three elected officials from other jurisdictions to be appointed by the council, a representative of the Sound Cities Association, a representative of a public safety agency, which is police, fire or emergency medical services, to be appointed by the council and a nonvoting technical and facilitation consultant selected by the executive; and*

*The department of executive services and the office of policy, strategy and budget shall provide any necessary support to develop the ordinance required by this proviso.*

*The executive must file the ordinance required by this proviso by July 1, 2015*

The ordinance required by this proviso will establish a body, consisting of representatives of the Council, Executive and officials from other local governments that will recommend a strategic plan for the Next Generation 911 and make recommendations concerning the proposed governance structure of E911 in the county. This high level group with Council-appointees will provide independent recommendations to Council at a level to ensure implementation.

In addition, the Council adopted language requiring that the County Auditor perform independent reviews of E911 operations with the following language:

*Of this appropriation \$300,000 may be expended or encumbered only on or before June 30, 2015 and solely to conduct:*

*A. A financial review of the King County Enhanced 911 program, its reserves and financial policies, including an evaluation of the county's systems compared to national best practices; and*

*B. A technical audit of King County's implementation of Next Generation 911 policies, standards, technology and implementation timelines, including evaluation of King County's program compared to state requirements and actions, and national best practices.*

The purpose of this proviso is to allow the County Auditor to complete both a financial and technical review of the county's E911 and NG911 programs to establish an independent basis for financial information and provide an independent third party evaluation of the county's implementation of NG911. This information will be used by the PSAP Oversight Committee in developing a county strategic NG911 plan. The auditor has already begun work to complete the proviso requirements.

**ATTACHMENTS** none