



# County of Fairfax, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

March 27, 2018

**TO:** Sharon Bulova, Chairman  
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (BOS)

**FROM:** Edward H. Blum, Chairman *EHB*  
Fairfax County Information Technology Policy Advisory Committee (ITPAC)

**SUBJECT:** ITPAC's FY2019 Budget Letter to the Board of Supervisors

ITPAC meets regularly with senior staff from the Department of Information Technology (DIT) to discuss the IT budget, technology strategy and challenges facing the County. Representing the local community as well as experienced IT executives and experts providing insight into IT best practices, ITPAC looks for opportunities to employ technology to improve County agency operations and deliver superior services to County residents and businesses. ITPAC examines and pursues options to protect investments, improve service delivery and reduce costs.

Incorporating input from County functional areas and citizens including ITPAC, the County Executive has produced budget recommendations focused on achieving BOS strategic priorities within the County's fiscal constraints. The recommendations afford continued opportunity for integration of County agencies' business which will increase overall efficiencies. ITPAC commends two recent IT-related accomplishments that highlight the effectiveness of the DIT team and its leadership:

### 1. Successful Rollout of the Redesigned Fairfax County Website

ITPAC applauds the success of the County website redesign and new web content management system. Launched in December 2017, the new website represents a major reimagining of how residents and businesses interact electronically with Fairfax County agencies/organizations using any computer, tablet or smartphone. The project team that designed and implemented the new site recognized that their concept for a citizen-centered web experience would necessitate a different approach toward how the County responds to inquiries and provides access to data. The website team led the creation of cross-Line of Business teams that collaborated to create thousands of pages of web content that is more responsive to actual queries, reduces duplication and is easier to maintain/keep current. The scope of the undertaking was substantial, involving migration of 80,000 pieces of content (pages, document, links, etc.) contributed by 225 content publishers in 55 County agencies. The resulting product enables residents and businesses to use any device to quickly find their own answers to county-related questions or connect directly with an agency when they require personalized service.

The new website is a technical and organizational achievement worthy of recognition and a potential model for future IT projects. Fairfax County has received inquiries from other Virginia jurisdictions as well as other states that seek to emulate the excellence and effectiveness of this new website. ITPAC recommends special commendation for the team responsible for this achievement and publicizing the new website through media channels.



## 2. Innovative Funding for County's IT Investment Portfolio

Coordination between the Department of Management and Budget (DMB) and DIT has resulted in an innovative approach that produced significant, well-timed and much needed increased investment in the County's IT portfolio. DMB has combined 3Q FY18 funds with FY19 funds in the Advertised Budget to provide \$15.27M in support for the County's IT investment portfolio. This represents a notable increase from the \$6.8M average budget over the prior three years. It will enable DIT to fund 87% (20 of 23) FY19 IT projects County agencies have submitted. All these projects meet the County's strategic priorities and include a mix of initiatives that benefit both citizens and employees, resulting in a measurable improvement in securing and strengthening the County's IT infrastructure.

ITPAC strongly endorses this enhanced investment. We commend DMB and DIT for pursuing this creative, outside-the-box approach toward securing increased funding for critically important IT investments. For several years ITPAC has urged the Board and the County Executive to earmark additional resources to fund IT projects. We applaud all initiatives that result in much needed IT investments. The citizens and businesses of Fairfax County expect their government to keep pace with rapidly evolving information technology. The County must remain committed to agile and innovative approaches toward funding its IT infrastructure.

**ITPAC also recommends that the Board of Supervisors continue to fully support investment in two ongoing IT projects** that will replace inefficient, expensive end-of-lifecycle technologies that frustrate both the public and county employees who serve them.

### A. Planning Land Use System (PLUS) Project

PLUS is a multi-year project that will replace the current legacy land use systems that are aging and awkward for the multiple agencies using them, and reside on a combination of vendor and custom obsolete legacy technology. PLUS is a strategic multi-agency initiative that will provide a modern technology platform that meets County strategic goals, business and customer needs, is adaptable, and eliminates outdated, siloed systems. Supporting five major land use agencies, PLUS will replace and consolidate multiple legacy land use systems supporting zoning/development review, building permits/license issuance, code enforcement and cashing with an integrated adaptable enterprise solution and ongoing implementation and integration with e-plans review capabilities.

The project improves business processes for better customer service, increases reliability of information, and supports continuous improvement and innovation for land use and development activities. ITPAC was recently briefed on the status of the PLUS project and is encouraged by the progress the team has made employing a hybrid agile approach to implement a solution built on an industry-leading platform but tailored to meet Fairfax County's specific needs. ITPAC again reaffirms the PLUS project as a key priority for IT investment dollars and for moving forward as quickly as possible.

### B. Human Services (HS) Integrative Roadmap

Multiple County agencies and DIT are pursuing a multi-year initiative to improve the delivery of human services through a comprehensive re-engineering of processes and the IT components that enable them. Individuals and families served by the existing HS systems often have their needs addressed by multiple programs and services. Clients often are asked to supply the same information to each agency and must ensure appropriate records are passed from one agency to the next.



This major initiative ties together the work of various health, housing, and human services agencies to deliver person-centered services to residents. Information Technology (IT) will enable the re-engineered, client centered processes. The County will have a comprehensive view of clients and their needs – enabling improved service quality with accurate and timely data, and increased data sharing among HS and Public Safety agencies. This will improve detection of at-risk clients, increase visibility and accountability for client outcomes, and implement common standards for data confidentiality and security across agencies and programs. ITPAC reaffirms its support of this critically important project, and the need to prioritize associated resources.

## Ongoing and Emerging Overarching Issues

ITPAC tracks trends and developments in the IT industry that could impact the County and DIT both in the immediate future and beyond. ITPAC believes the following issues warrant the attention of DIT and recommends that the Board respond positively to requests for funding:

- **Security:** The threat to IT systems posed by hostile governments, non-state organizations and individual hackers continues to evolve and become increasingly ominous. The recent ransomware attacks on the city of Atlanta and Mecklenburg County (NC) and the hack into the 911 system in Baltimore demonstrate that municipal government IT assets are increasingly considered prime targets. The rapid growth in Internet-based connectivity of software and components creates more opportunities and vectors by which a government’s technology could be attacked for ransom or to create general chaos and/or sow distrust in government. Funding initiatives to counter these threats – through modernized hardware components, threat detection/resolution systems, software security upgrades, security training and the like – are truly essential investments the County and DIT. It is recommended that more nimble general county administrative processes or authority be available to DIT be able to sustain county IT performance and reduce risks.
- **Maintaining Quality:** DIT is increasingly at risk of becoming over-loaded and over-leveraged with new responsibilities that require investments and ongoing expert oversight and management, such as computerized building automation and industrial systems, video teleconferencing program support, storage associated with public safety vehicles and related body camera imagery, and growth in FOIA-driven requirements. The Board should provide ongoing incremental funding for the technologies and staff required to support these objectives.

ITPAC looks forward to continuing support of DIT and its efforts to ensure that Fairfax County remains one of the country’s leading technology communities, a preferred locality in which to live and do business.

Cc:

Information Technology Policy Advisory Committee  
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