



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

March 27, 2015

TO: Sharon Bulova, Chairman
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

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

SUBJECT: ITPAC's FY2016 Budget Letter to the Board of Supervisors

The Fairfax County Information Technology program has kept pace well with public demands for information and services and provided improved efficiencies for government for over a decade. Working with the Department of Information Technology (DIT), ITPAC regularly reviews County IT for opportunities to use technology to protect investments, reduce costs, and improve service. It also advises DIT on best practices and important opportunities afforded by technology innovations and trends.

County reliance on technology to function effectively continues to increase, both for agency services and operational infrastructure. Some examples: County agencies need the rapid ramp-up of more productive, newer, support-intensive technologies to perform responsively and cost-effectively. Also, a growing critical challenge is cyber-security to protect IT systems and data. This requires the IT Security Office to expand in both expert staff and tools. Further, telecommunications - which is the backbone of field operations for many agencies including police and emergency services - is a constantly evolving technology arena.

At this point, year after year cost reductions and cost-avoidance over six constrained budget years have seriously degraded critical operations and services due to lack of staff to support required operations, and now limit the ability of the County to implement needed technology capabilities to address growing and changing needs.

ITPAC applauds the rigorous review process the Senior IT Steering Committee created for prioritizing IT investments in this budget proposal. However, it urges the County to ensure critical staff growth in DIT over the next two years and to continue the IT investment priority process. ITPAC summarized strategic priorities for Fairfax County IT that we believe are important in preparing the final budget for FY2016.

1. Adopt the IT Investment Portfolio FY2016 –2017 in the Advertised Budget.

ITPAC notes with grave concern that, in a time when County reliance on technology is growing exponentially and technology is evolving ever more rapidly, this year's budget represents a record low funding level (30% of unconstrained years) in the 20 years since the inception of the IT investment portfolio. Additionally, in the FY2015 and FY2016 budget cycles only 50% of agency requests for IT project support were funded. The County Executive noted in his budget presentation that IT projects are likely to need more funding in the near future since unsupportable legacy systems must be replaced to ensure Fairfax County maintains core functions. Other major systems must also be replaced/refreshed to modernize services and ensure systems are supportable.

Though fewer than desirable to achieve potential improvements in agency operations, the investment projects in the Advertised Budget address essential county requirements for IT security, protection of prior investments, continuous improvement in constituent services and agency efficiencies, and support for

maintenance of a current and supportable County technology infrastructure. **ITPAC supports full funding of the \$6,424,000 proposed investment portfolio.** This portfolio includes the updates for essential GIS services, first steps in the replacement and consolidation of obsolete Land Development Systems, and vital on-going investments in Public Safety technology for managing incidents and emergencies where crucial technology is evolving rapidly.

2. Prepare to Staff DIT to Support New and Growing Demands for Technology

ITPAC notes that while operating budgets and staff resources are constrained with continuous budget reductions, DIT must maintain a supportable technology infrastructure as the rapid pace of innovation and change and emerging technologies present service challenges. The demand to harness and apply new and complex technologies has substantially increased support required by an already strained IT workforce. ITPAC notes that increasing workloads associated with support for evolving technologies have not been accompanied by adequate adjustments in DIT's resources/staff -- jeopardizing DIT's ability to maintain service levels and manage the growing demand for its services.

Some areas where demands for new support-intensive technologies have grown significantly between 2012 and 2014 and continue to expand are:

- **Public Service Initiatives--19% increase** in use of the county web sites, **48% increase** in use of **online GIS map** transactions, **76% increase in on-line/web permit applications** (apply, pay for and print permits 24 hours /7 days a week).
- **Digital Government Operations--62% increase in county mobile applications** available on all mobile platforms, **9% increase in revenue collection** via e-Government platforms, **29% increase** in wireless mobile devices such as mobile computer terminals used by public safety and field inspectors.
- **Infrastructure Requirements—10% increase in sophisticated cybersecurity threats requiring effective defense and mitigation, 15% increase** in data storage and management.
- **Miscellaneous Evolving and Expanding IT Support Needs—**
 - **Building automation and construction systems.**
 - **Utilizing, disseminating, protecting and storing video data and evidence** for public safety, criminal justice, social services, and other county functions.
 - **Regional interoperability,** Fairfax County DIT leadership and key technology initiatives such as GIS, Next Gen 911 and cyber security.

3. Strengthen DIT's Oversight of Countywide IT Staff

The County's IT organization is a hybrid with the centralized IT agency (DIT) and decentralized IT staff in agencies. DIT serves as the steward of the county's information technology resources, ensuring the availability of secure, stable and reliable systems to effectively support the county's existing and emerging technology needs. While county agencies are responsible for identifying and translating business needs into technology solutions, they must work directly with DIT to design, implement and manage major business systems and supporting infrastructure.

Autonomy of agency IT staff limits the County capacity to maximize the use of IT positions countywide and it reduces the opportunity to synchronize/leverage solutions and efforts countywide. ITPAC recommends strengthening DIT's oversight of agency-based IT resources, even having a role in managing agency-based IT staff to address redundancy and overlapping efforts between DIT and county agencies.

Issues such as inconsistencies among agencies in approach, assignment of classification, skill levels, and performance of IT work can be addressed more strategically with active DIT oversight.

In summary: All county functions rely on technology; it is the lifeblood of effective and cost-efficient operations today. *For FY 2016, based on budget challenges, we support the FY 2016 Advertised Budget package without further reductions, but caution that the IT investment plan needs to return to a level that more fully supports county government needs and enables services efficiencies across the board.*

Looking ahead to FY2017, DIT staffing concerns must be addressed, the public's growing demands for quality service must be met, and critical replacement investments must be made.

Cc:

Information Technology Policy Advisory Committee
Edward L. Long, Jr., County Executive
David J. Molchany, Deputy County Executive
Wanda Gibson, Chief Technology Officer
Susan Datta, Chief Financial Officer