



# County of Fairfax, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

March 23, 2017

**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 FY2018 Budget Letter to the Board of Supervisors

In December 2016, ITPAC met with senior staff from the Department of Information Technology (DIT) and the Department of Management and Budget to be briefed on the FY2018 revenue forecast and fiscal challenges facing the County. Representing the community as well as providing information on IT best practices, ITPAC looks for opportunities to use technology to advance agency operation to support growing community needs and improve service. Options are pursued within the context of protecting investments, maintaining the excellence of human capital, and controlling costs.

After significant review incorporating input from County functional areas and citizens including ITPAC, the County Executive has produced a budget recommendation focused on achieving BOS strategic priorities which also addresses the County fiscal constraints. Among other key points, the recommendations afford continued opportunity for integration of County agencies' business which will increase overall efficiencies.

**ITPAC cautions against squeezing cuts from DIT budgets despite overall budget constraints.**

County IT service and operational requirements continue to grow rapidly fed by citizen needs, government mandates, and partner government entities. Agencies, particularly police and other critical public services, must continue to evolve with the constantly changing, more responsive IT systems that enable better and faster performance in their jobs. Also, the County must aggressively protect against increasingly numerous and sophisticated cyberattacks which incessantly probe for vulnerabilities. Over the past year, ITPAC has discussed current challenges and technology options with DIT and various agencies in regular meetings. These discussions and the current budget situation led ITPAC to support the strategic importance of the following which were sent to the County Executive for budget preparation:

**Transition Radio Communications to Push-to-Talk (PTT) for agencies as feasible**

For the approximately 3200 non-public safety radio users in County agencies and schools, the County has developed a cost-effective, more-functionally-diverse wireless communications strategy. Users will transition from the unsupported, single-purpose, proprietary radio system with a \$17 million replacement cost, to the Push-To-Talk feature of Internet-connected smartphones from wireless carriers. Meeting a wider set of needs for agency mobile workforce communications, the strategy provides a future-proof solution while reducing the significant capital costs for replacement of traditional radio systems, their infrastructure, and devices. ITPAC endorsed the plan for DIT to move ahead with the transition for County agencies and schools although Virginia Code prevented implementation for school buses. The plan is well underway and smartphones are already in wide use in County agencies and schools. With the recent unanimous passage of House Bill HB1888 in the 2017 VA legislative session, the Virginia Code was amended to permit this new technology to be used in a safe manner on school buses.



### **Next Generation 911 and strategies to enable wireless broadband for public safety**

The 911 facility needs improved interoperability with other local jurisdictions and more flexible implementation with commercial off-the-shelf technology versus proprietary systems to reduced maintenance costs. The multi-phase strategic transition of the County's core 911 system architecture to a current and supportable platform will meet this need and establish the foundation for NG911 multimedia capabilities such as text, video, and photographs.

### **PLUS project to achieve operational improvements and customer self-service**

Land use is key to advancing economic development. The current land use system is aging, awkward for the multiple agencies using it, and resides on a combination of vendor and custom legacy technology, now exclusively maintained by DIT. A strategic multi-agency initiative in the IT Plan will replace it with a modern technology platform that meets County strategic goals, business and customer needs, that is adaptable, and that eliminates the risk associated with outdated, silo systems. Supporting five major land use agencies, it will enable seamless business process integration while streamlining plan, permit and inspection timeframes. The project will improve business processes for better customer service, increase reliability of information, and support continuous improvement and innovation for land use and development activities. Given the strategic nature and benefits of this project, ITPAC reaffirms PLUS project as a key priority for IT investment dollars and for moving forward as quickly as possible.

### **Human Services (HS) Integrative Roadmap**

Individuals and families served by the County's HS system often have multiple needs addressed by multiple programs and services. Clients working with multiple organizations often supply each with the same information and have to ensure appropriate records are passed from one to another. This major initiative will tie 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 without information/data silos, improved service quality with accurate and timely data, 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.

### **Investment in WEB redesign**

With website update requirements rapidly implemented agency by agency, key elements of user inquiries are spread throughout the website. Citizens must work through agency information silos to find what they need. Implementing an enterprise Web Content Management System allows for a new information architecture to improve functionality and processes for the user. A complete web content review of 55 agencies is the first step in reorganizing County information into a user-centric website featuring information by topic across agencies for improved public service. Web redesign and an effective Content Management System can mean enhanced search engine optimization and improved ability to keep pace with evolving technologies and improvements.

Again, ITPAC cautions against squeezing cuts from DIT budgets despite overall budget constraints. The County relies on technology to perform effectively and must stay abreast of the most cost effective solutions and proven technologies to meet its needs carefully. The need to protect against ever-increasing cyber invasion capabilities, address rapidly advancing technology support for agency operations, and maintain a stable and up to date technology infrastructure continues to grow. Required newer technologies must also be handled well or they could jeopardize rather than improve County information integrity.



Other key consideration for Fairfax County IT that ITPAC sees as important for the FY2018 budget are summarized below.

***Additional Considerations:***

- ITPAC continues to stress that County IT positions need to be re-evaluated for appropriate compensation to be competitive in this market for required skills, especially in cyber security and key highly desired IT skill areas.
- Currently, the County and schools use the same fiber network, wireless communications contracts, and financial system. However, given that budgets have become more and more limited and that promises to continue, ITPAC recommends moving to greater technology cooperation between the County and schools to yield further efficiencies and operational cost savings. Areas to consider for additional cost savings include: Data center, commercial hosting, staff co-location, IT infrastructure consolidation, IT operations, aggregated cost of commonly used enterprise software, document imaging and storage, cloud services, GIS, and cyber security protection programs. Implementing some options may also provide ways to fulfill unmet needs by optimizing coverage of essential technologies for less cost.
- ITPAC endorses the LOB Phase II strategies for IT, which are county-wide priorities for effective IT management:
  - Record digitization
  - Multi-System integration opportunities to reduce silo systems and process duplication and enable effective use of data for projecting service needs and assist with decision making
  - Continue to leverage systems and streamline processes

ITPAC looks forward to continuing to support the best practices in Fairfax County IT decisions and implementations.

Cc:

Information Technology Policy Advisory Committee  
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