



# County of Fairfax, Virginia

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December 12, 2018

**TO:** Bryan J. Hill, County Executive

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

**SUBJECT:** FY 2020 ITPAC Interim Budget Letter

## **Introduction:**

Throughout 2018, using its expertise and experience in the IT industry as well as knowledge of County citizen needs, ITPAC reviewed Fairfax County technology strategy and IT investments for opportunities to improve service and contain cost. Specific items discussed include:

- Cyber Security
- Staffing requirements
- County-wide infrastructure modernization including e-mail in the cloud / Office 365
- Public Safety, Human Services and Land Development (PLUS) projects
- County website redesign and update
- GIS
- Next Generation 9 1 1
- Wireless broadband and Push-to-Talk transformation
- Enterprise-wide Audio Visual Teleconferencing project
- Technology-related legislative matters

Strategic, targeted and effective use of technology is a key element in achieving County goals to maximize efficiencies and enable opportunities. ITPAC supports DIT objectives:

- To effectively realize major improvements and efficiencies, County business process transformations should take place simultaneously with technology investments.
- To ensure County goals are achieved and sustainable, DIT's mission requires it to work closely with agencies and stakeholders to enhance their knowledge of IT potential.
- To ensure the most effective solutions, implementing projects with new technology must occur at the right time, neither too late nor at the bleeding edge of innovation.

ITPAC advises that the County's IT program model and practices remain sound. However, with society rapidly becoming more digital while staff experiences more attrition, DIT needs the capacity and flexibility to pivot when needed to address new opportunities and repurpose resources or acquire new ones expeditiously.

## **Challenges to Achieving More Effective and Efficient Operation:**

Traditional or "legacy" administrative processes impede and even make impossible the agility imperative for today's effective IT organizations to succeed. The resulting delays impose significant costs to deploy services and lose considerable time to realize the benefits. Critical issues are:

- *Identifying, hiring and retaining top tier talent is an endangered critical success factor.* ITPAC continues to emphasize for executive attention the growing issue of County IT personnel resources. Competition for IT talent among governments and the private sector in this region is quite strong. County compensation is not competitive. This will be further exacerbated when Amazon and other major firms add to those already located in the area and pulling from the talent pool. Fairfax County should join with its government peers in reviewing and updating IT positions and specialized professionals' salary scales.
- *The County's IT acquisition process must increase its agility and reduce the time to execute IT contracts.* Current practices unnecessarily drag out getting technology investments realized and in some cases actually prevent implementation.
- *Cyber threats continue to grow and evolve rapidly.* With additional County services going online for greater efficiencies and citizen access, cybersecurity protection solutions and methods must keep pace. Increased funding directed toward further reinforcing the County's cyber security and data privacy protection capabilities is money well spent.
- *The proliferation of networkable devices (and video) in all agencies are generating enormous amounts of data ("Big Data") which the County must gather, securely store and manage, and analyze.* Doing so is critical to support service efficiency and productivity. Computer technology is now developing rapidly in data systems and this data has become a valuable planning and operational tool. Focus on data planning and management has become extremely important.

#### **Additional Efficiency Opportunities:**

ITPAC supports these opportunities for more effective use of resources:

- Aggressively work with partner agencies including FCPS, and/or neighboring jurisdictions on consolidation, shared services, personnel requirements, etc.
- Explore and remove obstacles to selling or renting County-designed IT services to other jurisdictions who have similar needs but fewer resources to defray costs.
- Expand investment in digitization and use of electronic forms to improve operations.
- Review the current deployment of embedded agency-based IT analysts. Consider consolidating some positions and/or responsibilities to central IT for better resource utilization, adherence to common practices, and equity in IT skills development.
- Consolidate independent data and voice infrastructure environments and continue transition to cloud services that yield better value at lower cost or improved capacity.
- Expand work on enterprise-wide data analytics, management dashboards and citizen portals for on-line inquiries, harnessing the enormous amounts of data to make strategic budget and programmatic decisions better and faster.

#### **Specific FY20 project investment recommendation highlights:**

- **Continue Investment in the Planning Land Use System (PLUS) project to achieve operational improvements and customer self-service.** This strategic, multi-agency project replaces a set of antiquated systems with a modern technology platform which, once implemented, provides seamless business-process integration. It streamlines plan, permit and inspection processes and supports continuous improvement and innovation.

- **Continue Investment in the Human Services (HS) Integrative Roadmap:** Individuals and families served by the County's HS system frequently have needs which must be coordinated and addressed by multiple programs and services. Clients working with multiple services often must supply each with the same information. This initiative aims to tie together and help coordinate the work of various health, housing, and social services agencies to deliver person-centered services. This also reduces operation cost and risks associated with redundant and overlapping processes.
- **Fund Data Center Consolidation:** ITPAC supports relocating the County data center to a commercial off-site location as part of next generation IT infrastructure modernization. The goal is improving technology operational efficiency and resiliency as well as ensuring high-availability and improved cyber security. This move also releases prime Government Center space for other needs and reduces utility consumption costs. This approach should be examined for application to the Courts and FCPS at the right time.

**Conclusion:**

ITPAC appreciates the opportunity to have direct input into the County's IT processes. As with other high performing organizations, the County's reliance on technology continues to increase. With the need to protect against constantly evolving cyber threats and the rapid advance in the use of technology to deliver services, the County must stay abreast of the latest technologies to meet its goals. ITPAC looks forward to continuing to support Fairfax County's best practices for technology governance and implementation strategies.

Cc:

Information Technology Policy Advisory Committee  
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