



County of Fairfax, Virginia

December 11, 2019

TO: Bryan J. Hill, County Executive

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

SUBJECT: FY 2021 ITPAC Interim Budget Letter

Introduction

During 2019, ITPAC reviewed the County's technology strategy and IT investments. ITPAC members believe that for the County to achieve its goals to maximize efficiencies and enable opportunities, two strategic IT investment areas need particular emphasis and focus:

- Cyber Security
- Digital Transformation, together with handling the Data Explosion with top-quality Analytics

These affect every aspect of County operation, including developing and implementing the Offsite Data Center Relocation, Tax Modernization, Land Development and other funded projects.

The County's IT program model and practices remain sound. However, with rapid digital transformation and high citizen expectations of technology, DIT must be able to pivot as needed to address new opportunities and repurpose resources. Utilizing and deploying technology well will be a key factor in the success of the County's Strategic Plan. When necessary, DIT must be a "positive disruptor" for the potential of IT. Technologies delivered must achieve County goals and be sustainable. To achieve effective and successful results, it is critical for DIT to engage early in the business process transformations working with stakeholders and agencies as a trusted partner and improving communications with them. DIT can then link solutions to County strategic planning priority areas and the DIT strategic plan.

Impediments to Achieving the Mission

Ubiquitous and rapidly evolving technology heightens constituent expectations for high-value automation. To address these demands the County must enable DIT's agility and responsiveness and ensure accelerated refresh cycles. It must also update financial/operational processes.

- Growing cyber threats coupled with the expansion of the County's technology footprint require timely deployment of security protection to ensure resilient and uninterrupted operations. But, as County investment in cyber security and data protection consume a growing share of the IT budget, other automation needs should not be shortchanged.
- The proliferation of data and growing value of data analytics drastically increases requirements for technology to gather, manage, preserve, and analyze data. This is critical

to support service efficiency and productivity for County agencies. Satisfying demand for these new capabilities must be balanced with investments to maintain existing automation.

- The IT industry's shift from traditional one-time or annual licensing to paying for IT As-a-Service reduces initial enterprise investment but increases ongoing per-user expenses. As agencies deploy solutions to more users, licensing creates fiscal challenges which the budget must appropriately consider.
- Identifying, hiring and retaining needed IT talent is a critical success factor that continues to challenge the County. Recruitment is stressed by significant impending retirements, robust regional competition and a County compensation plan which is not competitive. The County needs to take the steps necessary to be an attractive technology employer.

Efficiency and Effectiveness Recommendations

ITPAC supports the following for more effective use of resources. *These tie in with many Key Themes of the Nine Strategic Planning Priority Areas.*

- Implement BizTech operational ideas to help customers streamline, automate and get more value from business applications and technology that enhance operational success. Investments depend on one another.
- Strategically expand and improve digital services, elevate organization agility and move from project-oriented to product-oriented development.
- Innovatively use technology to achieve desired civic outcomes, deliver business value and partner with others (such as FCPS or local jurisdictions) to co-create solutions and services. Examples include predictive analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), and internet of things (IoT).
- Seek ways to incorporate equitable access to technology across Fairfax County.
- Review the current practice of imbedded agency-based IT analysts. Consider moving some roles, responsibilities and positions to central IT for better utilization of resources, use of common practices and equity in IT skills development and assignments.
- Develop a unified communications and telephony modernization strategy that will support a more mobile workforce and allow greater flexibility in workspace options.
- Expand work on enterprise-wide data governance with analytics and citizen portals. Harness the enormous amount of data to make more effective budget and programmatic decisions aligned with the nine priority areas in the County's strategic plan.

Additional FY21 Recommendation Highlights

- Continue the innovative multi-year, multi-budget process investment strategy for major IT projects such as the Planning Land Use System (PLUS), the Human Services Integrative Roadmap and the Enterprise Data Analytics and Innovation project to achieve operational improvements while benefiting from technology innovations and providing timely funding.
- Provide additional funding as needed to obtain and maintain required licenses for software and other core systems. Costs here are increasing rapidly throughout the industry and will continue to grow in future years.

- Fund remaining costs associated with the relocation of the County data center to an off-site location. This is an ongoing success story. The investment in IT modernization has the long-term impact of improving technology operational efficiency, resiliency, high-availability and most importantly security. The move also reduces the cost of utilities and gives prime space, especially in the Government Center, back for other needs.

Conclusion

In closing, ITPAC appreciates the opportunity to have direct input in 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 information and 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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