Eastside Regional Public Safety Communications Center Initiative:  
August 2005 Update

For Immediate Communication with Dispatch Center Staff and  
Interested Police, Fire and EMS Employees

What is the Eastside Regional Public Safety Communications Center Initiative?

The initiative is a collaborative effort between 8 cities and 5 fire districts/agencies to  
explore the feasibility of creating a new joint public agency to oversee and operate a  
regionalized dispatch center to serve police, fire and emergency service providers.

The Initiative was launched in 2004 by 5 cities (Kirkland, Mercer Island, Bellevue,  
Medina, Clyde Hill) and the Woodinville Fire and Life Safety District. An initial  
feasibility study completed in June 2004 found considerable common ground between  
those jurisdictions regarding the benefits and challenges of pursuing a regionalized  
dispatch agency.

A second phase of work is now underway on the Initiative. By the end of 2005, the goal  
is to have an agreed upon governance model and business plan.

There are now thirteen (13) jurisdictions participating in the project:

City of Bellevue  
City of Clyde Hill  
City of Kirkland  
City of Medina  
City of Mercer Island  
City of Bothell  
City of Issaquah  
City of Redmond Fire  
Woodinville Fire and Life Safety District  
Shoreline Fire District  
Northshore Fire District  
Eastsid Fire and Rescue  
Fall City Fire District 27

In addition, the Washington State Patrol is considering participating in some way, and the  
King County Sheriff’s Department is actively monitoring the Initiative. Additional  
jurisdictions are welcome to participate.

Why are we exploring the option of a regional dispatch center?

The benefits of regionalized dispatch, depending on how it is structured, could include:

- Increased efficiencies and economies scale
- Reduced costs overall
- Improved funding opportunities
- Higher levels of service
- Greater “voice and vote” for those agencies receiving dispatch service in operating, financial  
  and governance decisions
What would the new agency look like and when would it be created?

If implemented, the project would involve the consolidation of some of the multiple independent public safety dispatch operations now operating in North East King County. Whether the project proceeds to implementation, who would be involved, how it would happen, when it would happen, and where it would happen are all issues that are not yet decided. All these issues are being examined in this current phase II work, which will be completed in 2005. If the project does proceed to implementation, the consolidation of dispatch agencies is not anticipated to begin any sooner than three years after this phase of the work is completed.

What has happened on the Initiative in the last two months?

The Steering Committee met on June 17 and again on July 15.

At the June 17 meeting, the group confirmed initial membership and meeting dates for four subcommittees. These subcommittees are working over the summer to develop further detailed proposals for the Steering Committee to review. The subcommittees and their Chairpersons are:

- **Governance and Finance** subcommittee (Chair: Chief Marcus Kragness, Shoreline Fire District)
- **Law Enforcement Dispatch** subcommittee (Chair: Captain Greg Edwards, Kirkland Police Department)
- **Fire/EMS Dispatch** subcommittee (Chair: Chief Tim Fuller, Redmond Fire Department)
- **Technology/Facilities/Operations** subcommittee (Chair: Brenda Cooper, Kirkland Information Technology Director)

Also at the June 17 meeting, the Steering Committee reviewed how some other regionalized public safety agencies are structured, in order to understand the range of issues that have to be decided in developing a governance model for this Initiative. Agencies reviewed included EPSCA (the Eastside Public Safety Communications Agency), SNOPAC (a regionalized police, fire and EMS dispatch agency serving most of Snohomish County) and ValleyCom (a regionalized police, fire and EMS dispatch agency serving South King County cities and fire districts).

Also at the June 17 meeting, the consultant team identified four issues that should be resolved sooner rather than later in the project: inclusion or exclusion of records management services in the scope of the new agency; whether to include subscribers as well as owners in the new agency; the degree of separation of the fire, EMS and police dispatch functions; whether any other functions should be included in the agency mission. No decision has been made yet on any on these issues.

It was agreed that before the Steering Committee decides whether to incorporate 800 MHZ radio system ownership and maintenance into its scope of services, the EPSCA
board needs to discuss the idea, since EPSCA currently provides this service to most of
the jurisdictions participating in the Initiative.

The meeting concluded with an hour-long small group exercise to discuss issues of
mission, operations, governance and finance.

Later in June, each jurisdiction participating in the Initiative was asked to complete a
lengthy survey regarding their preferences on various issues about mission, operations,
governance and finance of a new dispatch agency. The results of these surveys are
posted on the Initiative website

The survey results show strong consensus between the jurisdictions on the vast majority
of issues and ideas surveyed.

At its July 15 Steering Committee meeting, the group reviewed more options for how
other areas of the state and the Northwest have chosen to regionalize dispatch agencies.
Included in this review were CENCOM (a regionalized public safety dispatch agency
serving all of Kitsap County, its cities and fire districts), CRESA (a regionalized public
safety dispatch agency serving all of Clark County, Washington and its cities and fire
districts), and WCCA (a regional dispatch agency serving Washington County, Oregon
its cities and fire districts).

Also at the July 15 meetings, the four subcommittees reported on their discussions to
date.

**What is Happening Next?**

To get additional feedback, learn first-hand about specific issues from 9-1-1 call receivers
and dispatchers, and answer questions, the consultant team will meet with staff at the
dispatch centers in Issaquah, Bellevue, Kirkland and Bothell, in August and early
September.

A draft Statement of Values and Principles, which will be used to guide detailed
development of a governance model, has been crafted and is being circulated for
comment; it will be presented for discussion and possible approval at the September
Steering Committee meeting.

Representatives from ValleyCom will meet with interested participants on September 1
to answer questions about how that agency is structured and operated.

The Steering Committee is scheduled to meet again on September 16.

For further information, see the project website at
The contact person for (insert jurisdiction name) is (Name) (phone number).

Additional regular communications will be forthcoming, approximately monthly, to keep you informed about the progress of the study effort.