




BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: CEO
Department No.: 012
For Agenda Of: 10/1/2019
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Tme: 1.5 Hours
Continued Item:
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department: Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer 
Director(s)
Contact Info: Bernard Melekian, Assistant County Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Public Safety Dispatch Separation

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Risk Management

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Receive and file an update from staff on the proposed Regional Fire Communications Facility (RFCF), including preliminary cost estimates for construction and operations;
- b) Direct staff to focus planning efforts on one of the following locations:
 - i. Option 1: Expand the existing Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to accommodate a Regional Fire Communications Facility (RFCF); or
 - ii. Option 2: Build a new Regional Fire Communications Facility at the Santa Ynez Airport; and
- c) Authorize staff to enter into negotiations with regional partners who wish to participate in the RFCF;
- d) Provide other direction as appropriate; and
- e) Determine this action is exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15378(b)(5), which are organizational or administrative activities of governments that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes to the environment.

Summary Text:

At the Board meeting of May 7, 2019, the Board directed staff to review three options:

1. An expansion of the existing Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to accommodate the new RFCF
2. Identify a potential location north of the Gaviota Tunnel
3. Construction of a new RFCF adjacent to the existing Public Safety Dispatch Center

The CEO's office, General Services and the RRM Design Group, the consultants retained by the Fire department, conducted evaluations and developed preliminary construction and staffing budgets for Option 1 (EOC expansion) as well as a general design template for an alternate location north of the Gaviota Tunnel. Ultimately, staff determined that the most promising northern location was at the Santa Ynez Airport adjacent to Fire Station 32. After careful analysis and discussion with the affected parties, staff determined that the construction of a new RFCF adjacent to the existing center was not desirable.

While both locations have positive aspects to recommend them, staff recommends pursuing Option 2, (the Santa Ynez Airport). Staff determined that both Option 1 and Option 2 are viable locations. A new facility at the Santa Ynez Airport would cost more to construct but would provide a central county location and separation from the existing dispatch center to ensure redundancy in the event of a regional disaster. The estimated construction costs for the Santa Ynez location exceed the estimated EOC construction costs by just over \$2.1 million.

Constructing the new facility adjacent to the EOC would keep the center in close proximity to Fire Headquarters, provide greater efficiencies both in terms of staffing and increasing emergency response capacity by making appropriate use of Station 19 and would require less funding for construction. However, selection of this option does not resolve the redundancy issue. A redundant center somewhere in the northern part of the county could be established with this option, but that cost is not included in this analysis. At the Board's direction, county staff will study the selected location in more detail to develop a more refined construction cost estimate and affirm the suitability of the site selected.

Overall, the system operating costs will increase by \$2.48 million annually regardless of the location selected. Staff anticipates that the participation of regional partners will cover a portion but not all of these costs. The fire department and the county budget office are still developing the cost-sharing methodology. At the time of this report, only the Montecito and Carpinteria Fire District Boards have authorized their staff to enter into negotiations with the county concerning cost allocation.

Background:

Previous Board Actions

The Board's history with respect to this matter is as follows:

- **July 27, 2017:** Received the report from DeltaWRX and directed staff to conduct a more detailed analysis of each of the alternatives presented.
- **August 28, 2018:** Directed staff to conduct an analysis as to the feasibility of a physical separation of Law and Fire, and a subsequent collaboration with Santa Maria. The delay in returning to the Board was due to the intervening fire and debris flow disasters.
- **November 13, 2018:** Received an update from staff requesting additional time to conduct the analysis.
- **May 7, 2019:** Directed staff to evaluate cost and staffing estimates for an EOC expansion and the parking lot adjacent to the existing Public Safety Dispatch Center. The Board also directed staff to identify a suitable location. At this meeting, the option of collaborating with the City of Santa Maria was set aside. However, the possibility of developing a redundant center at their facility is still under consideration.

Project Assumptions

- The Regional Fire Communications Facility (RFCF) needs to meet “Essential Services” construction standards.
- The County EMS system, including AMR operations, will run out of the RFCF.
- That as regional fire and emergency medical partners participate in the RFCF, they will contribute financially to the cost of running the facility.
- There will be two Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs); a primary and a secondary PSAP. The Sheriff will continue to operate the primary PSAP.
- The change will not affect the Sheriff’s ability to operate the primary PSAP.
- There will be no negative impacts to the General Fund.
- Appropriate system improvements will be made to the existing center.
- There will be no loss of space or functionality at the existing EOC should the RFCF be co-located at that location.

Construction Costs

The Fire department retained the RRM Design Group (RRM) to provide preliminary estimates for the EOC expansion. In addition, RRM provided an estimate for a standardized template for use at any suitable location. All of the involved parties agreed that any estimates associated with the template were subject to change based on the site selected. RRM’s underlying construction cost assumption is \$700 per square foot.

Option 1: Expanding the Emergency Operations Center

As discussed at the May 2019 Board meeting, staff from Fire and General Services found the EOC option suitable as a site for the RFCF. Constructed to “Essential Facility” standards, the EOC’s design and structure allows for future expansion, primarily along the western portion of the building. It is in close proximity to Fire headquarters, County IT resources including fiber-optic cables and has access to generators and Uninterrupted Power Sources. There is ample parking and space to allow for construction activities without disrupting ongoing operations. This project is able to comply with the County’s Zero Net Energy (ZNE) standard.

RRM estimated the one-time construction costs for the RFCF at \$4,907,910 based on adding 6,200 square feet to the existing EOC. Combined with the estimates for equipment and furniture, site improvements and other costs totaling \$4,802,379 and the market escalation cost of \$665,568, the total project cost for the RFCF is \$10,375,857. This figure does not include 1,363 square feet for the new Joint Information Center and Call Center. The estimated cost for that portion of the project will be \$954,100 and will not be charged to the fire department or its partners.

One aspect of selecting this option will be the conversion of Fire Station 19 to allow for sleeping quarters and some additional conference room space. Fire and General Services believe that the old Fire Station 19 offers adequate space for the proposed usage. Consequently, the expanded EOC would accommodate both the RFCF, the new call center, and the Joint Information Center. The Fire department believes that the costs associated with the proposed changes to Station 19 would be negligible.

As discussed at the May Board meeting, the biggest obstacle to the utilization of this space for the RFCF is developing a design that fully integrates the EOC expansion and the RFCF without negatively affecting each other’s operations. During extended emergency operations, such as the Thomas Fire and 1/9 Debris Flow, the EOC was fully utilized.

Option 2: Building a new RFCF at the Santa Ynez Airport

In response to the Board’s direction to look for a suitable location in the north county, staff studied several potential sites. Each location had positive and negative attributes. Ultimately, interest focused on the property adjacent to County Fire Station 32 at the Santa Ynez Airport. Staff from the CEO’s office, the Fire department and General Services have toured the facility. All parties agreed that the location was a suitable location for the RFCF. The airport property provides a centralized location in the county that would benefit all potential partners, now and in the future.

This site also has an appropriate degree of physical separation from the current Public Safety Dispatch Center. This separation would ensure redundancy in case of an event that caused one center to go off-line. In addition, housing costs are generally more affordable in the mid and northern parts of the county which could assist in attracting and retaining future dispatchers. If the Board designates this site for further study, staff will conduct a more intensive site analysis to ensure that there are no issues related to either the adjacent landfill or FAA associated regulations. However, a preliminary review by General Services has not revealed any significant barriers.

RRM estimated the one-time construction costs at \$5,526,290 based on a facility footprint of 7,177 square feet. Combined with the estimates for equipment and furniture, site improvements and other costs totaling \$6,219,304 and the market escalation cost of \$742,913, the total project cost for the RFCF is \$12,488,507.

Staff based the estimated costs on the general template that RRM developed. A more in-depth refinement of costs based on this exact location will be required. The county fire chiefs have indicated that they have no concerns with this location.

Option 3: Build a new facility adjacent to the existing Dispatch Center

In response to Board direction in May, staff evaluated the possibility of constructing a new facility in the parking lot immediately west of the current facility. This facility would occupy what is currently a parking lot, would allow for easier sharing of IT infrastructure and would permit the current facility to continue operations during construction.

Staff studied this option, but ultimately discarded it as a viable option. This option offers no savings with respect to construction costs. Additionally, it would disrupt the existing operation and reduce an already over utilized parking capacity. Given that the property in question is in the middle of the Sheriff’s Headquarters campus, it provides none of the desired geographical separation nor is it in reasonable proximity to Fire Headquarters. Neither the Sheriff nor the Fire Department supported this option.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Table 1: Comparison of One-Time Costs

	Option 1¹ EOC Expansion	Option 2 New RFCF Santa Ynez Airport
Facility		
Construction	\$ 4,907,910	\$ 5,526,290
Site improvements, systems, and equipment	3,753,351	4,898,869
Contingency	1,049,028	1,320,435

¹ The EOC expansion figures do not include costs for the new Call Center and JIC.

Subtotal Facility	\$ 9,710,289	\$ 11,745,594
Market Escalation	665,568	742,913
Total Facility	\$ 10,375,857	\$ 12,488,507

Table 2: Comparison of FTEs Staffing

	Current (FTEs)	Proposed (FTEs)
Dispatch Center	37.33	--
Law Enforcement Only	--	28.33
RFCF	--	21.00
Total	37.33	49.33

Table 3: Comparison of Ongoing Costs Operating Costs

	Current	Primary PSAP Law Enforcement	Secondary PSAP RFCF
Sheriff	\$ 5,962,600	\$ 4,400,156	\$ 0
Fire	\$ 766,500	\$ 481,636	\$ 4,330,715
Total	\$ 6,729,100	\$ 4,881,792	\$ 4,330,715

Table 4: Comparison of Total Ongoing System Costs

	Cost
Primary PSAP	\$ 4,881,792
Secondary PSAP	4,330,715
Total Proposed Communications System	\$ 9,212,507
Current Dispatch Center	6,729,100
System Cost Increase	\$ 2,483,407

Construction Costs: The one-time costs are estimated at \$10.37 million (EOC expansion) and \$12.48 million (Santa Ynez location). The Fire department has sufficient funds available for either option.

Operating Costs: The separation of the Fire department from the existing Public Safety Communications Facility will result in an overall increased system cost of \$2.48 million. Assuming all potential partners choose to participate, staff's best estimate is that this additional cost would be somewhat offset with additional revenue, however there will still be an overall system funding gap of approximately \$1.1 million which would be borne by the Fire District. Given the RFCF would likely not be in operations for at least the next two years, the Fire department could develop an operations funding plan in preparation of this cost increase.

Currently, the Montecito Fire District and the Carpinteria Fire District Boards have voted to enter into negotiations with the county. Staff will bring back the cost allocation methodology to the Board once it is finalized.

Recommendation

While both locations would be more than adequate for the new center, staff recommends that the Board select the Santa Ynez Airport location as the desired location for the new RFCF in order to ensure redundancy in the event of a regional disaster. In spite of the greater construction cost, the location is centrally located and has the desired geographic separation from the existing facility, which could provide for greater public safety resiliency. Besides a site analysis, staff will request support from the Santa Ynez Airport Authority for this project. Preliminary discussions with the Airport Authority have been encouraging.

County staff will also refine operational costs and proposes to begin independent discussions with the appropriate jurisdictions to determine their willingness to participate in the RFCF.

Attachments:

Authored by:

Bernard Melekian, DPPD
Assistant County Executive Officer