

**Montgomery County, Maryland**  
**Office of the County Executive**  
**Office of Internal Audit**



**Assessment of 9-1-1 Consolidated Emergency**  
**Communications Center Transition Plan**

**March 20, 2017**

# Highlights

## Why MCIA Did this Audit

Based on a recent a recent 9-1-1 incident review that recommended that the County conduct additional focused assessments of 9-1-1 Operations, the accounting firm of SC&H, under contract with the County's Office of Internal Audit (MCIA) and with assistance from Winbourne Consulting, LLC (Winbourne), performed an assessment of the implementation of the County's plan to transition the Emergency Communication Center (ECC) to a consolidated operations model – creating a singular point of contact for public safety and the community.

The ECC is the primary link between a citizen, who reports an emergency via 9-1-1, and the police, fire and rescue personnel and equipment, who respond to an incident scene. The plan will achieve an organizational model that will transition from an ECC separately staffed and managed by Fire & Rescue Service (MCFRS) personnel and Police Department (MCPD) personnel, to an ECC that is staffed by certified MCPD ECC personnel cross-trained in MCFRS and emergency medical services call-taking and dispatching.

## What MCIA Recommends

MCIA is making eight recommendations to the County, MCFRS and MCPD related to the following areas: Staffing and Training, the ECC Consolidation Project Charter, ECC Governance and Structure, and the ECC Facilities. The recommendations are intended to ensure successful and timely transition to consolidated 9-1-1 operations.

March 2017

## Assessment of 9-1-1 Consolidated Emergency Communications Center Transition Plan

### What MCIA Found

The assessment found that while the framework for the consolidation has been put in place and there has been progress in certain areas since the May 2012 decision to consolidate the ECC operations under the MCPD, additional steps should be taken to ensure successful and timely transition to consolidated operations.

MCIA identified the need to confront several risk issues that, if left unaddressed, will continue to impact the successful implementation of the County's 9-1-1 consolidation plan. The recommendations that represent the building blocks for the successful consolidation of 9-1-1 operations include the following:

- Development and management of a re-baselined schedule based on validated and realistic assumptions regarding hiring, staffing, and training program that together will provide a sufficient number of ECC staff trained as Unified Call Takers (UCTs)
- Stakeholder discussions regarding the future governance of the new ECC organization, to include the future roles and responsibilities of each of the stakeholders
- Development of a new primary PSAP with adequate capacity for the anticipated staffing needs, as well as the back-up facility to the new primary PSAP.

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# Background

Montgomery County is in the process of transitioning to a consolidated Emergency Communication Center (ECC), to create a singular point of contact for public safety and the community. The organizational model will transition from an ECC that is separately staffed and managed by Fire & Rescue Service (MCFRS) personnel and Police Department (MCPD) personnel, to an ECC that is staffed by certified MCPD ECC personnel cross-trained in MCFRS and emergency medical services call-taking and dispatching.

A recent 9-1-1 incident review recommended that the County conduct a comprehensive assessment of the implementation plan for this 9-1-1 transition, using industry benchmarks and standards, employee and stakeholder surveys, and best practices; the primary purpose of which is to determine the actions that must be taken to support the successful and timely implementation of the planned consolidation. The review identified the importance of ensuring that the existing transition plan is comprehensive and includes appropriate attention to the change management aspects of the transition process to ensure (1) success of the transition and (2) that the transition efforts do not create more issues and challenges than they profess to serve.

The County requested that an assessment of the implementation of the transition plan – including current progress and planned future steps in the transition – be conducted to identify (a) any major risks that would need to be addressed to ensure the success of the consolidation underway, and (b) any adjustments to the schedule and planned actions. The assessment was expected to use industry benchmarks and standards, and best practices. The County assigned responsibility for conducting the assessment to the Office of Internal Audit (MCIA). MCIA undertook the investigation with the assistance of the SC&H Group, a contractor that provides internal audit services to the County. The SC&H Group received support from Winbourne Consulting, LLC to provide subject matter expertise to this project.<sup>1</sup>

## Objectives

The assessment had the following objectives:

- Review the transition plan to determine if it is comprehensive and includes appropriate attention to change management, and how change management is applied during the transition process;
- Assess the transition plan using industry benchmarks, standards, and best practices to evaluate the plan for the following criteria:
  - Confirm that the transition is moving forward timely and efficiently
  - Identify major risks that would need to be addressed to ensure the success of the consolidation underway

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<sup>1</sup> Winbourne Consulting, LLC provides extensive experience in the breadth of issues vital to 9-1-1 centers, including those related to the facility, operations, technology and human resources.

- Determine if the current transition effort/plan needs to be modified/enhanced in any way so as to optimize the likelihood of successful and timely transition to the consolidated operations model
- Propose adjustments to the schedule and planned actions

This report summarizes the assessment approach, and the resultant findings and recommendations for County action.

## Methodology and Approach

The current ECC Transition Team analysis was reviewed along with other related documents such as project status reports, briefing, deliverable reports, and communications with MCPD and MCFRS staff members, particularly those working in the ECC. Based on the initial document review, the transition scheduling issues, risks, and obstacles to the transition process were clarified, along with the key decision-makers within the transition process. Interviews were then conducted with the key stakeholders from both MCPD, MCFRS, and ECC Management. The purpose of the interviews was to clarify the initial findings resulting from the document review and to obtain updated information. On-site-visits were also conducted at the existing MCPD and MCFRS ECC facilities to observe operations.

Based on the findings from the interviews and risk analysis, a gap analysis was conducted that compared the findings with the County's objectives for the Transition Plan and 9-1-1 industry best practices for ECC consolidation. Findings and recommendations were developed based on documentation review, interviews, and discussions with the stakeholders associated with the transition planning. Winbourne Consulting also utilized data from other 9-1-1 consolidation projects for comparison with the County's consolidation activities and schedule that was provided. The resulting analysis provides a basis for suggested courses of action for the County to consider.

## Overview of ECC Operations

The ECC is currently jointly-operated by the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) and the Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service (MCFRS). Based on a decision made by the County in 2012, the ECC is in the process of transitioning to a consolidated operation, under the direction of MCPD. The current Director (and Deputy Director) of the ECC are MCPD managers. There are Operations Managers and ECC Supervisors for both MCPD and MCFRS who oversee 9-1-1 call-taking and dispatch operations (and staff) for their respective departments. As of January 2017, the ECC has 152 authorized positions, and is operating with 106 full-time employees covering the multiple shifts required to support 24/7 ECC operations.

# Assessment of Progress toward a Consolidated ECC

The following section provides our analysis of the progress and challenges that the County has experienced working toward the goal of the consolidated 9-1-1 center, since the agreement was reached between the CAO and MCPD and MCFRS management in May 2012.

Our assessment of the progress toward ECC consolidation under the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) concluded that there has been progress since the County decided to consolidate the ECC operations under the MCPD, additional steps should be taken to ensure successful and timely transition to consolidated operations.

There have been several management challenges to the consolidation process to include:

- The MCPD Project Manager (PM) retired (Summer 2016) during the project. The current PM was not assigned prior to the retirement, which would have allowed for a transfer of knowledge and project status and insight to the new PM. The PM transition gap served as a constraint on the project needs being communicated to MCPD and MCFRS leadership and project support issues being facilitated across the county departments.
- The ECC management is managing major systems procurements and the implementation of new call taking and dispatch protocols, CAD and 9-1-1 CPE implementation, as well as the construction to upgrade the current ECC and AECC.

Based on our interviews with ECC management, we understand that the milestone that the County is using for determining final consolidation is the ability of the ECC to provide UCT operations for all incoming calls. Our analysis is based on the activities that are necessary to achieve that goal and the schedule and resources required. Our analysis of the consolidation project identified training and staffing issues as the “critical path” for achieving consolidation.

A number of important steps toward consolidation have been taken since May 2012. The data in the following table was provided to our team by the County:

ECC Consolidation Project Progress - Since May 2012	
Category	Accomplishment
<b>Project Charter</b>	Developed a Project Charter in August 2014
<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Staffing MCPD civilian operations</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over-hiring of MCPD civilian communicators continues</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently 76% of authorized staffing has been attained (9/2/2016) while also adding new positions</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training:</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 10 scheduled to graduate 11/2016</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positions added as part of Consolidation:</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 3 positions in FY15</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 23 positions in FY16</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 12 positions returned from MCFRS in FY16</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 3 positions added in FY17</li> </ul>

ECC Consolidation Project Progress - Since May 2012			
Category	Accomplishment		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Position Series created: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Operations Managers moved over August 2016</li> <li>○ Supervisors to be moved over September 2016</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Call takers/Dispatchers to be moved over on rolling basis based on attaining 3-discipline call taking qualification</li> <li>• Organizational Change Management (OCM) training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Gartner, Inc. conducted on-site training</li> </ul> </li> <li>• MCPD Dispatch Review Committee formed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review of serious, noteworthy, or policy impacting calls for service</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Medical Director position: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ MCFRS executed new contract for position 7/14/2016</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Last Fire class / MCFRS stops hiring civilians June 2015</li> </ul>		
	<b>Facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared MCFRS/MCP CAD skills Lab added doubling training capacity</li> <li>• Completed required modifications to the Alternate ECC (AECC)</li> </ul>	
		<b>Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire Administrative Calls: Completed to MCPD staff Transition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ MCFRS trained MCP personnel</li> <li>○ Service Level Agreement developed</li> <li>○ MCPD assumed MCFRS non-emergency calls for service April 18, 2015</li> </ul> </li> <li>• QA for EPD trained and implemented</li> <li>• Entry-Level training continues all within MCP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ MCPD attending MCFRS Cross Over training – Target Date for Check off – Dec 31, 16</li> <li>○ January 2016 FIRST Fire class for MCPD</li> <li>○ May 2016 SECOND Fire class for MCPD</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Fire Administrative Calls being answered by MCPD</li> <li>• New Position Series approved by OHR [FY17]</li> <li>• New Training Plan in Place 11/16</li> </ul>
	<b>Budget</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding for overtime for ECC staff training related to the 9-1-1 consolidation has been budgeted—one time only in FY 16</li> </ul>

**County’s Approach to ECC Consolidation**

Based on the documentation provided to the project team, the County developed plans in May 2012 to implement UCT as the key element of its consolidation strategy. According to the documentation we have available, the next step taken was in December 2013, when the CAO, MCPD, and MCFRS management agreed to proceed with the consolidation. Later, in August 2014, the County stakeholders agreed to a project charter.

The UCT strategy planned for all ECC calls to be received by MCPD staff using software-based standardized call taking protocols from the National Academy of Emergency Dispatch (NAED). The MCPD staff was trained to use the NAED police call-taking protocol. The training of MCPD staff in the use of the fire and medical protocols is now scheduled to begin in May 2017. We did not identify a targeted date for full operation of UCT-based call taking.

The approach of training the MCPD staff in fire and medical call taking and dispatching operations is a standard methodology for consolidating call taking and dispatching operations in a PSAP or 9-1-1 center. The ECC management is planning to transition MCFRS call taking and dispatch operations – replacing MCFRS sworn firefighters with civilian dispatchers to achieve consolidation.

### ECC Staff Training Challenges

Our experience with establishing consolidated 9-1-1 centers in other jurisdictions has consistently shown that staff training is a significant challenge to the process. Training must be considered along with facility and technology issues as the critical elements in a successful consolidation.

From our review of the Montgomery County ECC consolidation project, we identified staff training as the key factor to a successful consolidation. We further identified UCT training as the project's critical path, although the new CAD project and the scheduled facility changes will delay start of the UCT training until spring 2017. However, once the facility and CAD projects are completed, the focus will be on the UCT training process.

The ECC staff recently moved to the AECC from the PSCC and are performing call taking and dispatching operations from the AECC. The move was necessary to accommodate facility renovations that are required for new technology implementation in the PSCC.

### Staff Training is the Critical Path to Consolidation

Training the ECC staff through the transition from discipline-based call taking and dispatching to UCT and cross trained dispatchers is the critical path to consolidated ECC operations. A key concern is that until MCPD ECC staff can be trained in MCFRS dispatching, there are not enough trained fire and medical services call-taking and dispatching staff available to support UCT operations.

We identified an undocumented training plan through discussions with ECC management. As a result of these discussions we are aware that the County is currently in the process of validating the assumptions that this training plan was based on, including the availability of trainers and course curricula. We recognize the need for a realistic training schedule and plan, but were unable to develop such a schedule during this assessment because the aforementioned County review process.

In addition, the transition as previously planned required the sworn MCFRS dispatch supervisors to return to MCFRS operations outside the ECC. This plan is under reconsideration, due to the impact of eliminating fire operations expertise from the ECC fire dispatch operations.

In addition, the MCPD ECC staff training in UCT operations and fire and EMS dispatching is in place. Training has also occurred and for the new protocols, new 9-1-1 Customer Premise Equipment (CPE), and is planned for the new CAD.

Also, the ECC is continuing to train newly hired staff. Training new staff includes both extensive classroom time as well as OJT before being approved to work on their own.

### MCFRS Staffing Transition to ECC

The MCFRS civilian staff will transition to the MCPD ECC budget in February 2017. This is an important milestone in the consolidation process. The sworn MCFRS officers currently managing the fire call-taking and dispatching operations will continue in that capacity, and fire dispatching operations will continue to be supplemented by sworn MCFRS officers on an as-needed basis.

### UCT Training Schedule Issues

Based on discussions with ECC management, full UCT operations will require a total of 80 trained UCT call takers. The 80 trained UCTs will be scheduled to work on all ECC shifts serving 24 hours, 7 days per week. It should be noted that the training schedule and number of available UCTs resulting from the training is dependent on a number of issues: availability of a sufficient number of MCFRS trainers to conduct cross-training, formalized course curricula, and staff retention issues. Currently, the ECC has an average trainee dropout rate of 40% in each class.

### ECC Staffing Issues and Staffing Plans

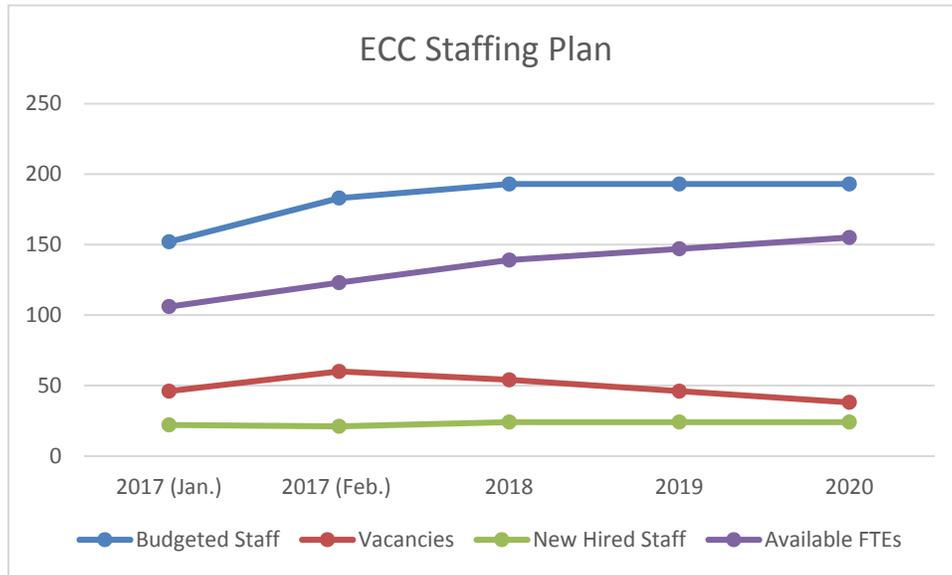
Our analysis indicates that the other key issue, in addition to training, impacting Montgomery County's consolidation initiative is ECC staffing. The ECC's authorized hiring complement is 193 Full Time Equivalent (FTE), once all positions are added as part of the consolidation project. Again, while an analysis of projected staffing levels (particularly for UCTs) through FY 2020 was conducted, realistic staffing level projections could not be developed without a validated training plan – because of the direct correlation between the number of certified UCTs resulting from the training program and the total number of certified UCTs onboard.

Our analysis, however, indicates that the ECC, even under a best-case scenario, would continue to have vacancies through 2020, although the ECC is hiring new staff on a regular basis. The vacancy level is affected not just by the training program discussed above, but also the 12% annual turnover of existing staff (including promotions, and lateral transfers (such as Sr. Dispatchers transferring to Quality Assurance). In February 2017, the MCFRS will transfer thirty-one (31) civilian positions, of which seventeen are filled, to the ECC.

The ECC management projects that the full staff complement of 193 FTEs will provide the basis for fully supporting emergency communications and dispatching operations with minimal overtime requirement. Of the 193 FTEs comprising the full complement of staff, that the ECC management projects 148 FTEs will be involved in call taking and dispatching functions.

The ECC management is projecting the continuous need to hire and train new staff members in FY's 2018-20 in order to compensate for staff turnover and the need for an appropriate number of trained personnel.

Based on data provided by ECC management (which is undergoing review currently within the County, we developed the table below. The table indicates that ECC staffing will continue to increase slowly toward the full complement of 193 FTEs over this time period. The impact of adding the MCFRS FTEs is seen in 2018, increasing the "Available FTEs". Also, the number of new hires starting training classes each year also increases. Correspondingly, the number of open vacancies also decreases over time.



However, the analysis indicates that even with the impact of the staffing increases and the unvalidated assumptions regarding the training program/schedule, the ECC is only able to increase staffing 46% toward the goal of a full 193 FTE complement over this time period. The reasons are a combination of annual staff turnover and the rigorous training requirements for new hires before they are eligible to operate independently as call takers and dispatchers. The staffing needs of the ECC will continue to present a key management challenge throughout this period and into the future.

Key Staffing Issues	
The key staffing issues that were identified include the following:	
Issue	Description
<b>Use of Overtime</b>	The current staffing shortage is creating the need for continuing overtime. The continued high utilization of overtime for the existing ECC staff is a "double-edged sword". On the one hand, the practice facilitates the ECC's ability to meet its training goals and ECC staff benefits monetarily from the over time. But, a high utilization of overtime can increase stress on staff members and contribute to retention issues.

Key Staffing Issues	
The key staffing issues that were identified include the following:	
Issue	Description
<b>Possible ECC Understaffing</b>	The current new hire class will bring the ECC staff level to 148 FTEs providing call taking and dispatch operations. The overall authorized staffing level of 193 include management, supervisors, and quality assurance staff, while the ECC is budgeted for a total of 193 FTEs. The ECC has a “new hire” class starting in December 2016. The continuing hiring process that the ECC is managing will enable the center to have adequate staffing for UCT cut-over.
<b>Strain on Trainers as well as Trainees</b>	Training the 9-1-1 staff on new systems, new operational policies and procedures, and new roles and responsibilities, requires detailed planning and execution; while keeping in mind that many of the staff members whom are participating in training will be called on to assist with training other existing staff members as well as new hires. All the training will require working overtime in an already short-staffed 9-1-1 center.
<b>Training Staff Availability</b>	The number of CTOs working at the ECC is also limited. In order to meet the transition training schedule, ECC management is QA staff as training staff. While assigning the QA staff to assist with the training, there is a risk that the QA function will experience performance issues by being dual tasked.
<b>Need for a Communications Plan</b>	A key industry-wide lesson related to consolidation is communications with PSAP staff on plans for consolidation. We did not identify a staff communications plan being used to inform ECC staff on the consolidation process. The absence of a plan for communicating with staff during a process as complex as a consolidation is found, in the 9-1-1 industry, to negatively impact morale and retention.

### ECC Staffing Comparison with Other Large Jurisdictions

A high-level PSAP staffing comparison was conducted that is presented in the table below. The table compares the Montgomery County ECC’s staffing (at both the actual and authorized levels) to other large jurisdictions in the US. The table only indicates that there could be an issue with the current, actual staffing level of 152. When the ECC reaches its authorized staffing level of 193, then the comparison places the ECC within similar levels as the comparison jurisdictions.

The analysis indicates that the impact of continuing to operate below authorized level of staffing has not impacted performance metrics such as time to answer a 9-1-1 call. Continuing to meet the 9-1-1 call answering performance metric of 90% of calls answered in 10 seconds or less and 95% of the calls received within 20 seconds during the busy hour. The busy hour is defined as the hour with the greatest call volume. The continued adherence to established call metrics despite the low staff to resident ratio could be attributable to the use of a significant amount of overtime that could exhaust staff and trigger additional retention issues. As the ECC

continues to hire, train and certify staff, the risk from this aspect of the staffing challenge should be mitigated.

ECC Staffing Comparison			
Comparison City or County 9-1-1	Population	9-1-1 Center Staffing (FTE)	9-1-1 Staff Members to 1,000 Residents
<b>Montgomery County, MD (152) – Actual</b>	1,030,000	152	0.148
<b>Montgomery County, MD (193) – Authorized</b>	1,030,000	193	0.187
<b>Virginia Beach, VA</b>	452,745	132	0.292
<b>Fairfax County, VA</b>	1,137,000	170	0.15
<b>Columbus Ohio</b>	822,553	154	0.187
<b>New York City</b>	8,000,000	2,220	0.278

### ECC Current Staffing Model, Per Shift

The current staffing model used by the ECC requires minimum staffing per 12-hour shift reflected in the following table. Adding Supervisors for UCT, fire, and police dispatch will add three positions:

ECC Current Staffing Model Per Shift	
Position	Number of Personnel
<b>MCPD Dispatchers</b>	6
<b>MCFRS Dispatchers</b>	4
<b>Call Takers</b>	15-16
<b>Supervisors</b>	3
<b>Total</b>	28-29 staff members

The ECC’s staffing as of November 8, 2016 was 148, including MCFRS staff (25). Without the MCFRS staff there are 123 ECC personnel. The ECC’s fully authorized staffing level is 193.

### Staff Turnover Comparison

The following table presents comparative data of staff turn over from several large metropolitan PSAPs. The data is primarily anecdotal, based on past projects Winbourne Consulting has conducted as well as from recent conversations with PSAP managers in these cities and Internet search.

NENA’s Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) Service Capability Criteria Rating Scale places a standard average annual PSAP staff turnover rate at 19% for staff that have passed their probationary period. The Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO) Project Retains has documented the national PSAP staff turnover rate at 17% (for an average center of 18 or more employees providing data).

Staff Turnover Comparisons		
City	Annual, Average Staff Turnover (2014-16)	Average Turnover in New Hire Training Classes
Montgomery County, MD	13%	37%
Fairfax County, VA	4%	33%
Virginia Beach, VA	19%	31%
Portland, OR	20%	58%
Chesterfield, VA	22%	28%
Average	11%	37%

The data shows the ECC staff turnover rate is below the national average of 19%. The ECC has an average turnover of new hire training classes than the PSAPs included in the table.

### ECC Governance Agreement and Structure

There is a differentiation between the Project Charter and the Consolidated ECC Governance Agreement and Structure. The Project Charter will address issues specific to achieving consolidation. The Governance Agreement will address issues associated with the operation of the consolidated center and future role and responsibilities of all the stakeholders following consolidation. Oversight of the project implementation and development of a governance agreement can and most practically will occur among the stakeholders on the Executive Steering Committee (ESC), if the ESC is established within the next 20-60 days.

**Purpose of the Governance Agreement:** A key element of the consolidation process is to answer the question of how the MCFRS and MCPD field operations will work with the ECC in the consolidated environment. A governance agreement and structure will define how the new ECC will function as a consolidated center. The governance agreement will provide the strategic and operational basis for continuing support and services from the MCPD led ECC and the MCFRS field operations.

The governance agreement and structure will enhance the County’s ability to oversee the transition of administrative tasks such as: budget, human resource and staffing, technology enhancements, and internal and external communications. The governance agreement would provide guidance on a strategic level, as well as on an operational level, to provide a communication “bridge” between the ECC and its customers: the MCPD and MCFRS field operations.

**End State ECC Organization:** As part of the governance agreement discussions, we recognize that an agreement was reached between the MCPD and MCFRS identifying when MCFRS dispatching staff will transition to MCPD, although clearly defining fire and rescue dispatch management is still to be resolved. Position classifications were also changed, which will have an impact on the management of the ECC into the future as a consolidated center. This plan includes the following features:

- Use MCFRS sworn officers as Fire Liaison Officer (FLO), as Fire dispatch supervisors and fire dispatchers, as needed
- Unified command will include the FLOs
- The FLOs will report to a Battalion Chief and to a FD Assistant Chief
- MCFRS CAD Administration person will join the MCPD CAD team as a unified CAD administration team
- MCFRS QA position will transition to MCPD March/April 2017
- Fire/EMS dispatching staff will transition to 12 hour shifts in July 2018

This approach will reduce potential risk to the dispatching process and ensure continuity between the ECC and fire and emergency medical field units. The use of the FLOs will also allow the ECC management to focus on training staff as UCTs and multi-disciplined dispatchers without the risk of losing the fire operations expertise.

The use of the FLOs to oversee fire dispatching is used in multiple Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) across the country. For example, Fairfax County, VA uses positions for sworn police and fire officers as Uniformed Fire Officer (UFO) and Uniformed Police Officer (UPO) to provide expertise and operational knowledge to dispatchers during major incidents and events.

## Summary of Findings & Recommendations

Based on the documentation received and the interviews with key staff from MCFRS and MCPD, the assessment of the progress toward ECC consolidation under the MCPD finds that while the framework for the consolidation has been put in place and there has been progress in certain areas since the May 2012 decision to consolidate the ECC operations under the MCPD, additional steps should be taken to ensure successful and timely transition to consolidated operations.

The following issues were identified for the County's consideration based on the completed assessment:

**Project Charter:** Based on the documentation provided, the County developed plans in May 2012. The plans were further defined in the Public Safety Emergency Communications Center Consolidation Project Charter from August 15, 2014. Based on our review of these documents we did not find documentation regarding key components of the consolidation process in the following areas:

- **No Definition or Metric for Successful Consolidation:** We could not identify a defined agreement as to what would constitute a Consolidated 9-1-1 Center from the documentation provided. The existing Charter does not identify a clear definition or metric of when consolidation would be considered complete. [We would note that based on discussions with ECC, MCPD, and MCFRS personnel we determined that the stakeholders are using the following informal definition for a successful consolidation:

when the ECC can implement full operations using Unified Call Takers (UCT<sup>2</sup>) for all incoming 9-1-1 calls.]

- **No Documented Management Plan or Project Schedule for Achieving Consolidation:** We did not find a detailed, agreed-upon schedule tied to a plan of activities to achieve the consolidated 9-1-1 center from the documentation provided. The existing Charter includes a list of important objectives, but does not include a project schedule or work plan for achieving consolidation.
- **Reporting:** We noted inconsistent reporting regarding the progress of the project, based on the available project documentation and interviews. The Charter does not define the communications plan for updating all stakeholders, especially ECC staff, nor a schedule for reporting.

We understand that the County is in the process of compiling an updated Project Charter, although we have not been provided a copy of that document. The deficiencies noted above should be addressed in that document.

**Training and Staffing:** Based on our evaluation of the project plans and its goal, we identified training and staffing challenges that must be addressed as keys to achieving successful consolidation.

**UCT Training Goal:** The goal of training 80 existing ECC staff members as UCTs presents a significant implementation challenge to the County, but is the key to achieving the consolidation.

- **Hiring, Training and Retention:** Staff hiring, training, and staff retention is an industry-wide challenge to 9-1-1 centers. As the ECC trains staff in the new Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system and in the UCT protocols and related operations, retaining staff that are required to undergo continuous training and work significant overtime in the process in order to maintain the current level of service will continue to be a challenge.
- **Overall Staffing Concern:** The ECC will need to continue to hire, train and certify new staff to reach its authorized staffing level of 193 FTEs. The ECC management hiring and training plan through FY 2020 will increase the personnel available for call taking, dispatching management, supervision and administration from 105 to 155. Still falling short of the authorized level of 193 FTEs. In order to maintain services levels and to meet the Unified Call Taker (UCT) training requirements, the ECC management will need to utilize staff overtime to overcome the staffing shortfall. The continuous use of overtime to supplement the lower staffing level could further contribute to retention challenges. The detailed staffing analysis is presented in Section 3.2, Staffing Issues.
- **Role of MCFRS Dispatch Expertise:** MCFRS discontinued hiring staff for the ECC operations in June 2015. ECC management indicated that one of their key concerns is training a sufficient number of MCPD ECC staff to replace MCFRS dispatch staff to meet

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<sup>2</sup> NOTE: At different points in this report, “UCT” is used to refer to either “Unified Call Taking” as a method of operations, or “Unified Call Takers” as the ECC personnel who have been fully trained and certified to take calls and dispatch services under this method of operation.

the proposed consolidation schedule. Their concern also includes the need for fire operations expertise within the ECC dispatch operations.

- **Staffing and ECC Facilities:** The PSCC and the AECC facilities have reached their physical capacity and must be considered a potential constraint on the consolidation process and future operations at the PSCC or the AECC. From a staffing perspective, the size of 9-1-1 operations floor serves as a constraint in that there is no more room to expand operations to accommodate County population growth, and any commensurate increase in ECC staffing resources.

**Competing ECC Management Priorities and Related Management Challenges:** In addition to the consolidation effort, ECC management is managing several large mission-critical projects, while also managing the day-to-day ECC operations. These projects include a new Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) implementation, as well as ECC construction modifications requiring staff to relocate to the Alternative Emergency Communications Center (AECC). Also, since 2012, the ECC leadership has changed, with a new Director appointed and, with the retirement of the previous MCPD Project Manager (PM), a new Project Manager being recently assigned.

**Future ECC Governance:** Based on our evaluation and experience with multiple consolidation projects, drawing on best practice documentation from industry organizations, such as the National Emergency Number Association (NENA), we identified the following issues that the consolidation initiative still needs to address:

- Governance Agreement and Structure.
- Planning for the new ECC organization and operational issues (how the activities will work with MCPD and MCFRS field units) has not been addressed. As a key element of the end-state vision of the consolidated center, the future role and responsibilities of all the stakeholders must be defined.
- The ECC currently utilizes the “ECC – Patrol Services Committee” to formally discuss procedural changes impacting call taking and dispatching. MCFRS and the ECC use a similar forum for this purpose. These practices are aligned with NENA’s best practices for managing PSAP relations with public safety operational units.

## Risk Assessment

Based on our observations and findings summarized above, we have identified the following key risks to a successful 9-1-1 transition:

**No Formal Documented Definition or Metric for ECC Consolidation:** The “end-state” or objective of the consolidation process is not documented. Without this definition the activities and related objectives/milestones cannot be established. We could not identify a clear definition of when consolidation would be considered as “complete”. **(Risk Rating: High)**

**Leadership Role:** Without consistent, regular oversight by the senior leadership that comprises the Executive Steering Committee, the consolidation will continue to progress slowly – impacted by the multiple priorities the ECC management is addressing. Only with regular

executive oversight can resources be redirected, priorities established, and changes implemented, that will impact the progress of the project. **(Risk Rating: High)**

**Staffing:** There are several notable staffing risks that can impact the ability of the ECC to consolidate timely, as follows:

- **Staffing Levels:** From our analysis, continuing to operate below the authorized staffing level of 193 has not impacted performance metrics such as the average time to answer a 9-1-1 call. This could be a result of the continuous use of high degree of overtime that increases risks for staff burnout and retention problems. As the ECC continues to hire, train and certify staff, the risk from this aspect of the staffing challenge will be mitigated. **(Risk Rating: High)**
- **PSCC and AECC Facility Limitations:** The PSCC and AECC facilities have reached their capacity to absorb additional technology and staff and can be considered a constraint on the consolidation process and future operations at the ECC. **(Risk Rating: High)**
- **Retention:** In order for the ECC to implement the use of the Unified Call Taker (UCT) for all incoming 9-1-1 calls, the ECC needs approximately 80 call takers trained, from the existing ECC staff, as UCTs. The risks of achieving this key consolidation goal are the rigorous training schedule and ongoing staff retention concerns. Currently ECC has a 40% drop-out rate for new hires and a 13% turnover with existing staff. If staff losses continue at this rate or increase over the next 2 years, the schedule will be impacted. The staffing issues are discussed in detail in Section, 3.2, Staffing Issues. **(Risk Rating: Medium)**
- **Overtime:** The ECC personnel will be required to work substantial hours of overtime to finish the training required to meet the UCT operational goal because of the necessary training and On-the-Job-Training (OJT) oversight staffing. This level of overtime work could further contribute to retention issues. Staff retention is an industry-wide challenge, especially impacting large, metropolitan 9-1-1 centers. **(Risk Rating: Medium)**

**Managing the Training Schedule:** Training is the key element in achieving consolidation. A new training schedule and plan, whose assumptions have been thoroughly validated does not exist, but needs to be developed. Managing the training schedule and meeting the training milestones will directly determine when the consolidation can be successfully achieved. Support from Departmental and County management for overall leadership as well as supporting additional resources, if needed, is required to enable the ECC management to meet these milestones. Note that even after the consolidation milestone is achieved, training will need to continue in order to train all ECC staff as UCTs. **(Risk Rating: High)**

**Maintaining Call Processing Metrics:** There are several risks that can adversely impact the ability of the ECC to continue to meet established call processing metrics, these risks are the following:

- The ECC meets the industry standards for 9-1-1 call processing<sup>3</sup>, but the transition will challenge the ECC’s ability to maintain this level of performance. There is a risk that during the planned training schedule that call processing times could increase.
- Due to the number of training classes required to accomplish the 9-1-1 consolidation transition, as well as implementation of the new CAD system, there could be a negative impact on call processing times. After completing the classroom training of each required class, each staff member will have to complete OJT before becoming certified.
- OJT training requires time and effort from both the person learning the new operation and an experienced person working at the same workstation for a considerable length of time. The person learning the new system or operation will respond at a slower rate than an experienced person. The experienced person working with the trainee will be focused on observing and coaching, taking experienced staff out of normal operations. Since there is a requirement for OJT associated with each new class, there could be an impact on call processing times. There are only a few options for the ECC management to consider to mitigate this risk, but all require additional hiring and training. Each of these options could contribute to heightened risk. **(Risk Rating: Medium)**

**Communications Plan:** The transition plan requires a communications plan. Proceeding without a communications plan is contrary to best practices associated with 9-1-1 center consolidation. Nationally, one of the key lessons learned related to successful consolidation is establishing and implementing an effective organizational communications plan and change management operation. **(Risk Rating: Medium)**

## Recommendations

Our recommendations address each of the findings and risk issues that we identified during the assessment. The following recommendations are derived from the lessons learned over many years in the 9-1-1 industry to consolidate 9-1-1 centers, and are the building blocks to the successful consolidation of a 9-1-1 center. In our opinion, without taking these steps, Montgomery County’s 9-1-1 consolidation plan will continue to be delayed:

- 1. ECC Staffing and Training.** We recommend that the ECC management implement the training program that is included in this report as the roadmap to train sufficient ECC staff as Unified Call Takers (UCT). We also recommend that the ECC management continue to implement the hiring and staffing plan that is included in this report. Although this plan does not project to employ the full complement of ECC staff before FY2020, the plan does increase the staffing by 24% from current staffing levels, while minimizing the risks associated with expanding the staff too quickly and reducing quality and service delivery metrics.

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<sup>3</sup> Industry Standard for answering 9-1-1 Calls as defined by the National Emergency Number Association is: “Ninety percent (90%) of all 9-1-1 calls arriving at the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) shall be answered within ten (10) seconds during the busy hour (the hour each day with the greatest call volume, as defined in the NENA Master Glossary). Ninety-five (95%) of all 9-1-1 calls should be answered within twenty (20) seconds.” NENA Call Answering Standard/Model Recommendation Document 56-005 June 10, 2006

- 2. Update and Adopt Project Charter.** We recommend that the County update the project charter with the end-state goal and the key steps required to implement the charter, within an agreed upon timeline. As stated above, we understand that a new, updated project charter is in development. We recommend the following issues be addressed in the new charter:

  - Document the end-state definition for the consolidation project, defining what will constitute a Consolidated 9-1-1 Center. Based on establishing the definition, metrics and milestones can be better established and managed.
  - Define a governing organizational structure for managing the consolidation project at all levels to include stakeholder roles and responsibilities, and reporting and accountability requirements. We believe that this structure should include an Executive Steering Committee (ESC) with senior management representative from key stakeholder departments – to provide the appropriate level of oversight and accountability.
  - Include a detailed schedule that is linked to specific plans and updated regularly, to include a progress reporting schedule.
  - Include a formal communications plan for communicating key information and progress regarding the consolidation project to ECC staff.
- 3. Updated Project Schedule.** We recommend that the County update and adopt a new, more realistic project schedule that factors in progress to-date, validated assumption regarding the planned training schedule, and other factors. [NOTE: We have been advised by ECC management that this process is currently underway.]
- 4. Management of the Training (and UCT Staffing) Schedule.** We recommend that the training schedule developed in conjunction with ECC management be formally reviewed and adopted by the County. We further recommend that performance against this training/project schedule be regularly reported monitored by the County. Since successful achievement of the training schedule and related metrics (including numbers of successfully-trained and certified UCTs) is key to the success of the consolidation project, it is essential that the County closely monitor this “critical path” item. Additionally, as the training project progresses, management should look for ways to increase the number of UCT trainees.
- 5. Future Consolidated ECC Governance Agreement and Structure.** We recommend that the stakeholders begin discussion on the future governance of the ECC in its relations with its primary stakeholders. Planning for the new ECC organization and how it will work with MCPD and MCFRS field units has not been addressed. As a key element of the end-state vision of the consolidated center, the future role and responsibilities of all the stakeholders must be defined – particularly given the mission-critical nature of ECC operations. [NOTE: This is separate and distinct from the governance structure during the project management phase to achieve consolidation.] This Governance Agreement should define the roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders in managing the consolidated Emergency Communications Center following completion of the consolidation project. We also

recommend that the County establish this Agreement and structure on a timeline that will allow for sufficient time to meet any budgetary or organizational changes so as not to delay full consolidation. This is driven by the following considerations, each of which have budgetary and organizational implications:

- Identifying what organizational functions may need resources and related budget estimates, and FTE requirements
- Providing a guideline for identifying short and long term organization changes are required within the ECC allowing the ECC management sufficient time to manage the changes and obtain authorizations that may be required

In regard to the Agreement and the supporting organizational structure, we recommend:

- The Agreement should provide the operational basis for continuing support and services from the MCPD-led ECC and the MCFRS field operations, as well as MCPD field operations.
- The County should establish a formal management structure (for example, an Executive Steering Committee (ESC)) to oversee ongoing implementation of the governance agreement, particularly during early stages following consolidation. The ESC will provide strategic oversight and support for the ECC and include, in addition to MCPD and MCFRS other County government stakeholders that can contribute to managing the strategic needs of the ECC such as the CAO's office, facilities, budget, human resources and other County agencies. This body will also oversee the transition among the key stakeholders and coordinate strategic needs between the MCPD managed ECC and the MCFRS operational needs. The ESC could meet on a quarterly, or as needed, basis.

**6. Operations Committee.** The ECC currently utilizes the *ECC – Patrol Services Committee* to formally discuss procedural changes impacting call taking and dispatching. MCFRS and the ECC use a similar forum. These practices are aligned with NENA's best practices for managing PSAP relations with public safety operational units. We recommend that the ECC continue this practice within a formal Operations Committee that will facilitate this collaboration within the overall Governance structure. This is a typical approach utilized by consolidated centers and is considered a best practice.

**7. Use of Sworn Fire Staff.** As a long-term measure, we recommend that the County leadership consider allowing MCFRS to assign sworn staff to the ECC to serve as Fire Liaison Officers (FLO) overseeing fire and EMS dispatching as a short-term ECC consolidation goal. The MCFRS FLOs will coordinate fire and EMS dispatching functions as expert dispatch operations, as well as managing major incidents and mutual aid responses. In the short term, Fire sworn staff would need to continue to "fill in" as fire dispatchers, as there was not a specific schedule to train civilian staff to completely take over this role. That would occur after UCT was "complete." The use of the FLOs to oversee fire and EMS dispatching is used in multiple PSAPs across the country. The ECC personnel serving as fire dispatching staff would report to the ECC MCPD management. This recommendation will reduce risk to

the dispatching operation and ensure continuity between the ECC and fire and rescue field units and facilitate the consolidation process.

- 8. PSCC Facility.** We recommend the County continue, and, if possible, accelerate the process to identify a site and budget for a new primary PSAP, as well as identifying the back-up facility to the new primary PSAP. The PSCC and the AECC facilities have reached their physical capacity and must be considered a potential constraint on the consolidation process and future operations at the PSCC or the AECC. From a staffing perspective, the size of PSCC and AECC's 9-1-1 operations areas is a constraint on operations, in that there is no more room to expand operations to accommodate County population growth, and any commensurate increases in ECC staffing resources.

## **Department Comments and MCIA Evaluation**

MCIA provided a draft of this report to the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) for their review and comment. MCPD stated they concurred with each of the recommendations and has worked since the report's completion toward implementing each of the recommendations. MCIA reviewed MCPD response to the report, and determined that no changes to the report's findings or recommendations was warranted. A copy of the MCPD memorandum appears as Appendix A.

## Appendix A - Department Response



DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

Isiah Leggett  
County Executive

J. Thomas Manger  
Chief of Police

March 17, 2017

TO: William Broglie, Internal Audit Manager  
Office of Internal Audit

FROM: J. Thomas Manger  
Chief of Police

SUBJECT: ECC Consolidation – Auditor's Report

The Department has reviewed the *Assessment of 9-1-1 Consolidated Emergency Communications Center Transition Plan* audit report completed by SC&H and Winbourne Consulting. I thank the Office of Internal Audit, SC&H and Winbourne Consulting for their work and recommendations throughout this project.

Since this report's completion, the Department has worked toward implementing the following recommendations and will continue to work toward implementing each of the remaining items. If you have any questions regarding this response, please contact Captain C. Thomas Jordan directly at **240-773-7074** or by e-mail at: [C.Thomas.Jordan@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov](mailto:C.Thomas.Jordan@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov).

Recommendations from the report will be reiterated below followed by the Department's response.

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### Office of the Chief of Police

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**Recommendation:**

1. ECC Staffing and Training. We recommend that the ECC management implement the training program that is included in this report as the roadmap to train sufficient ECC staff as Unified Call Takers (UCT). We also recommend that the ECC management continue to implement the hiring and staffing plan that is included in this report. Although this plan does not project to employ the full complement of ECC staff before FY2020, the plan does increase the staffing by 24% from current staffing levels, while minimizing the risks associated with expanding the staff too quickly and reducing quality and service delivery metrics.

**Police Response:**

The Department of Police concurs with this recommendation and is currently in the process of revamping the training programs associated with new hires and Unified Call Taking (UCT). The training programs will be reflective of the recommendations in the report and will seek a balanced approach that will expand staffing in a consistent and timely manner without reducing quality of service to our customers.

The associated staffing plan recommendations will also be incorporated into future staffing plans and training schedules to accommodate the projected staffing growth.

**Recommendation:**

2. Update and Adopt Project Charter. We recommend that the County update the project charter with the end-state goal and the key steps required to implement the charter, within an agreed upon timeline. As stated above, we understand that a new, updated project charter is in development. We recommend the following issues be addressed in the new charter:

**Police Response:**

The Department of Police concurs with this recommendation and is in the process of implementing the remaining items.

**Recommendation:**

- 2a. Document the end-state definition for the consolidation project, defining what will constitute a Consolidated 9-1-1 Center. Based on establishing the definition, metrics and milestones can be better established and managed.

**Police Response:**

The Department concurs with this recommendation and is in the process of incorporating an end-state definition of a Consolidated 9-1-1 Center. The finalized definition of a Consolidated 9-1-1 Center will be incorporated into the Project Charter after discussion and approval by the Executive Steering Committee.

**Recommendation:**

- 2b. Define a governing organizational structure for managing the consolidation project at all levels to include stakeholder roles and responsibilities, and reporting and accountability requirements. We believe that this structure should include an Executive Steering Committee (ESC) with senior management representative from key stakeholder departments – to provide the appropriate level of oversight and accountability.

**Police Response:**

The Department concurs with this recommendation and completed this action in November 2016. The Executive Steering Committee consists of senior management representatives from Police, FRS, OMB, OHR, DGS, DTS, and the County Executive's Office. The Executive Steering Committee meets regularly every month and provides appropriate governance, oversight, and accountability to the ECC Consolidation Project.

**Recommendation:**

- 2c. Include a detailed schedule that is linked to specific plans and updated regularly, to include a progress reporting schedule.

**Police Response:**

The Department concurs with this recommendation and has completed detailed schedules for areas related to the ECC Consolidation Project. The schedules, plans and respective progress reports are updated regularly and reported to the Executive Steering Committee.

**Recommendation:**

- 2d. Include a formal communications plan for communicating key information and progress regarding the consolidation project to ECC staff.

**Police Response:**

The Department concurs with this recommendation and is in the process of completing a formalized communication plan with the assistance of a contracted Change Management Specialist assigned to the ECC Consolidation Project. A SharePoint communication mechanism is being developed, with an anticipated completion date in April 2017 that will assist with providing contemporaneous and pertinent information regarding the ECC Consolidation Project to all affected stakeholders at ECC.

**Recommendation:**

3. Updated Project Schedule. We recommend that the County update and adopt a new, more realistic project schedule that factors in progress to-date, validated assumption regarding the planned training schedule, and other factors. [NOTE: We have been advised by ECC management that this process is currently underway.]

**Police Response:**

The Department concurs with this recommendation and has adopted a realistic project schedule that factors in hiring, completed training, and future training schedules.

**Recommendation:**

4. Management of the Training (and UCT Staffing) Schedule. We recommend that the training schedule developed in conjunction with ECC management be formally reviewed and adopted by the County. We further recommend that performance against this training/project schedule be regularly reported monitored by the County. Since successful achievement of the training schedule and related metrics (including numbers of successfully-trained and certified UCTs) is key to the success of the consolidation project, it is essential that the County closely monitor this "critical path" item. Additionally, as the training project progresses, management should look for ways to increase the number of UCT trainees.

**Police Response:**

The Department concurs with this recommendation and has taken steps toward implementation. The ECC Consolidation Project Manager identified and designated Training and Staffing as a “high risk” item requiring constant monitoring. Training and Staffing have specifically been designated as an action item with the Executive Steering Committee. Progress in these areas is reported weekly to the ECC Consolidation Project Manager and monthly to the Executive Steering Committee. The training schedule for new hires has been developed and conveyed to the Executive Steering Committee. The training schedule for cross-training in Universal Call Taking (UCT) is in development, will be implemented in a similar fashion and reported regularly to the Executive Steering Committee. Innovative solutions to increasing the number of UCT-trained personnel are in development and will balance quality and training resources to achieve the greatest degree of efficacy for the training program.

**Recommendation:**

5. Future Consolidated ECC Governance Agreement and Structure. We recommend that the stakeholders begin discussion on the future governance of the ECC in its relations with its primary stakeholders. Planning for the new ECC organization and how it will work with MCPD and MCFRS field units has not been addressed. As a key element of the end-state vision of the consolidated center, the future role and responsibilities of all the stakeholders must be defined – particularly given the mission-critical nature of ECC operations. [NOTE: This is separate and distinct from the governance structure during the project management phase to achieve consolidation.] This Governance Agreement should define the roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders in managing the consolidated Emergency Communications Center following completion of the consolidation project. We also recommend that the County establish this Agreement and structure on a timeline that will allow for sufficient time to meet any budgetary or organizational changes so as not to delay full consolidation. This is driven by the following considerations, each of which have budgetary and organizational implications:
  - Identifying what organizational functions may need resources and related budget estimates, and FTE requirements
  - Providing a guideline for identifying short and long term organization changes are required within the ECC allowing the ECC management sufficient time to manage the changes and obtain authorizations that may be required

**Police Response:**

The Department of Police concurs with this recommendation and is in the process of developing an end-state ECC Governance Structure to be approved through the Executive Steering Committee. Any structure developed will incorporate clearly defined field needs for both Police and FRS. Additionally, this structure will be implemented in a manner that provides sufficient time to meet planning and budgetary requirements.

**Recommendation:**

- 5a. In regard to the Agreement and the supporting organizational structure, we recommend the Agreement should provide the operational basis for continuing support and services from the MCPD-led ECC and the MCFRS field operations as well as MCPD field operations.

**Police Response:**

The Department of Police concurs with this recommendation and is in the process of developing an end-state ECC Governance Structure to be approved through the Executive Steering Committee. The development of this structure will be iterative in nature, transforming the current Executive Steering Committee into a post-consolidation Executive Steering Committee focused on supporting ECC with both Police and FRS operations. The Agreement leading to this structure will be developed and approved through the current Executive Steering Committee.

**Recommendation:**

- 5b. The County should establish a formal management structure [for example, an Executive Steering Committee (ESC)] to oversee ongoing implementation of the governance agreement, particularly during early stages following consolidation. The ESC will provide strategic oversight and support for the ECC and include, in addition to MCPD and MCFRS, other County government stakeholders that can contribute to managing the strategic needs of the ECC such as the CAO's office, facilities, budget, human resources and other County agencies. This body will also oversee the transition among the key stakeholders and coordinate strategic needs between the MCPD managed ECC and the MCFRS operational needs. The ESC could meet on a quarterly, or as needed, basis.

**Police Response:**

The Department of Police concurs with this recommendation and is in the process of developing an end-state ECC Governance Structure to be approved through the current Executive Steering Committee. The development of this structure will be iterative in nature, transforming the current Executive Steering Committee into a post-consolidation Executive Steering Committee focused on supporting ECC with both Police and FRS operations. The current Executive Steering Committee remains an excellent structure to become the post-consolidation governance body due to its inclusion of the necessary stakeholders to support ECC in the future. The Agreement leading to this structure will be developed and approved through the current Executive Steering Committee. It is anticipated that a post-consolidation Executive Steering Committee would continue with regular monthly meetings.

**Recommendation:**

6. Operations Committee. The ECC currently utilizes the ECC – Patrol Services Committee to formally discuss procedural changes impacting call taking and dispatching. MCFRS and the ECC use a similar forum. These practices are aligned with NENA’s best practices for managing PSAP relations with public safety operational units. We recommend that the ECC continue this practice within a formal Operations Committee that will facilitate this collaboration within the overall Governance structure. This is a typical approach utilized by consolidated centers and is considered a best practice.

**Police Response:**

The Department concurs with this recommendation and is in the process of implementation.

**Recommendation:**

7. Use of Sworn Fire Staff. As a long-term measure, we recommend that the County leadership consider allowing MCFRS to assign sworn staff to the ECC to serve as Fire Liaison Officers (FLO) overseeing fire and EMS dispatching as a short-term ECC consolidation goal. The MCFRS FLOs will coordinate fire and EMS dispatching functions as expert dispatch operations, as well as managing major incidents and mutual aid responses. In the short term, Fire sworn staff would need to continue to “fill in” as fire dispatchers, as there was not a specific schedule to train civilian staff to completely take over this role. That would occur after

UCT was “complete.” The use of the FLOs to oversee fire and EMS dispatching is used in multiple PSAPs across the country. The ECC personnel serving as fire dispatching staff would report to the ECC MCPD management. This recommendation will reduce risk to the dispatching operation and ensure continuity between the ECC and fire and rescue field units and facilitate the consolidation process.

**Police Response:**

The Department concurs with this recommendation and is in the process of working with FRS on implementation. This issue has been designated as a “risk” item and is being closely monitored by the Executive Steering Committee as an action item.

**Recommendation:**

8. PSCC Facility. We recommend the County continue, and, if possible, accelerate the process to identify a site and budget for a new primary PSAP, as well as identifying the back-up facility to the new primary PSAP. The PSCC and the AECC facilities have reached their physical capacity and must be considered a potential constraint on the consolidation process and future operations at the PSCC or the AECC. From a staffing perspective, the size of PSCC and AECC’s 9-1-1 operations areas is a constraint on operations, in that there is no more room to expand operations to accommodate County population growth, and any commensurate increases in ECC staffing resources.

**Police Response:**

The Department concurs with this recommendation, although the current term Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budgets do not include replacement of the PSCC or the AECC. With that in mind, we are in the process of working with DGS to identify solutions that allow ECC to increase capacity within the current facility as the population continues to grow within Montgomery County.

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JTM:mam  
c: Chief Reynolds/Management Services Bureau  
Capt. Jordan/ECC Consolidation Project