

# *City of Alexandria, Virginia*

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 07, 2010

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO #47 : ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REVIEW OF THE PROPOSED FY 2011 – 2016 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PLAN

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Attached is the final draft of the Review of the Proposed FY 2011-2016 Information Technology Plan provided by the Alexandria Commission on Information Technology. The Commission reviewed the Proposed FY 2011-FY 2016 Information Technology Plan (IT/CIP) and agrees with the Plan's approach in addressing a number of initiatives, including:

- The deployment and expansion of E-government to improve the delivery of City services to the public;
- The replacement and consolidation of Public Safety Emergency Communications equipment such as the computer aided dispatch and records management system (CAD/RMS);
- The replacement of the Human Resources/Payroll System to better manage City employees;
- The re-opening of the Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) project to more efficiently manage City vehicles; especially, their delivery of services during emergencies.

Key recommendations from the Commission to be considered in the future include:

- Making the IT Plan a true "top-down" strategic planning document integrated with the City's strategic plan;
- Closer coordination among City agencies, Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) and the Library system, to identify cost savings and service delivery in the City;
- Expanding the IT Plan to include a more efficient tracking of capital and operating expenditures, cost-benefit analysis and the rationale for spending; especially, for new projects or those that will increase costs; and
- Requiring the IT Plan to provide an annual assessment of the state of information technology in the City; also, more closely link projects and their budgets to the City's strategic plan.

Attachment

**City of Alexandria  
Commission on Information Technology**

**Review of the Proposed FY 2011-2016  
Information Technology Plan**

**April 5, 2010**

Phillip Acosta  
Nina Balia  
Daniel Brooks, Vice-Chair  
Steve Cooper  
Catherine Hogan  
Alicia Hughes  
Kostas Liopiros, Chair  
Page Moon  
Helen Morris  
Redella S. Pepper/Deb Roepke  
Bob Soltys  
Lynda Rudd  
Marie Schuler

## ***Introduction***

The Alexandria Commission on Information Technology has reviewed the City Manager's Proposed Information Technology Plan for Fiscal Years 2011-2016, in accordance with provisions of The Code of the City of Alexandria, Section 2-4-113(a)(1). The Commission makes the following observations regarding the current plan and recommendations for the development of future plans.

### ***The FY 2011-2016 Information Technology Plan***

The Information Technology Staff (ITS) has developed a reasoned, well-documented and organized plan, responsive to the difficult budget environment facing the City. We find this year's plan to be a measurable improvement to those of previous efforts.<sup>1</sup>

The Commission agrees with ITS's approach to the prioritization of project funding into three categories. Despite a reduction in funding and personnel, the ITS staff has markedly retained focus on a number of initiatives important to the functioning of City government. Among these are:

- The deployment and expansion of E-Government services to improve the delivery of City services to its employees, residents and businesses;
- The replacement and consolidation of public safety emergency communications equipment such as the computer aided dispatch and records management system (CAD/RMS) for the police and fire departments;<sup>2</sup>
- The replacement of the Human Resources/Payroll System to better manage and support the City's employees, its most important resource;<sup>3</sup> and
- The re-opening of the Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) for Non-public Safety project to extend technology for managing the City's mobile assets for more efficient deployment and delivery of services during emergencies.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Suellen Savukas, Project Management Division Chief, Information Technology Services, should be commended for her hard work in developing the IT Plans over the past several years.

<sup>2</sup> This is a necessary and high priority project, especially given the emphasis on improving public safety communications nationwide. The \$34.6 million for the CAD project represents over 65% of the projected IT Plan budget.

<sup>3</sup> The current legacy system is outdated and limited in its capabilities. It does not adequately incorporate desirable and required applicant tracking, position control or benefits administration. Converting the Human Resources/Payroll System to an up-to-date programmable system will assuredly likely result in a more efficient delivery and distribution of payroll and benefits that would result in significant cost savings.

<sup>4</sup> We note the use of GPS technology in Prince George's County for tracking and deployment of snowplows during the last snow emergency. Other cities are using similar

Progress, however, lags in several other areas. The Commission believes that there are efficiencies and savings to be realized through closer collaboration and coordination with the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) and the Alexandria Libraries. The ITS staff has started the collaborative process with the City Libraries, and is participating in the City/ACPS Shared Services Workgroup.<sup>5</sup> Given the current and projected budget environment, it is imperative that we continue to explore collaboration and coordination with the ACPS and the Alexandria Libraries to identify potential synergies and cost savings.<sup>6</sup>

Although the plan is better documented than before, from a citizen's perspective, the plan is missing some key transparency elements. As a public document, the plan should explain the City's technology priorities and expenditures, including cost-benefit analysis and rationale for spending, especially on new projects or those that will increase costs.

### ***Future Information Technology Plans***

The City should encourage the continued development of smart, future oriented plans for the use of information and communications technology (ICT) to enhance the operation of city government and the delivery of services to the citizens of Alexandria.

The ITS staff has a robust process in place for developing the annual IT Plan. This process is responsive to the guidance and direction of the Information Technologies Steering Committee.<sup>7</sup> The result, however, is a "bottom-up" collection of program and funding descriptions, as noted in previous Commission's reviews of the City's Information Technology Plan. In the Commission's review of the ITS's process for developing the IT plan, it was not apparent how the ITS' process incorporates strategic direction from City Council or how the IT plan is coupled to the City's strategic plan.

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technology to track and manage their mobile assets (e.g. buses, city vehicles etc.) for more efficient deployment and delivery of critical services.

<sup>5</sup> The Libraries are migrating to Lotus Notes and will be on the City's voice over IP (VoIP) phone system starting in April.

<sup>6</sup> In our reports on the FY 2009 and FY 2010 Proposed Information Technology Plans, the Commission recommended that the City create efficiencies through the logical consolidation and centralization of City IT assets as well as to explore the feasibility of closer collaboration and coordination of the IT functions of ACPS and the Libraries.

<sup>7</sup> The Information Technologies Steering Committee (ITSC) is composed of representatives from the City's top-level management and user agencies. As part of the IT Plan development process, the ITSC advises on the planning and prioritization of City IT systems and services. The ITSC's recommendations for the City's IT investments are guided by the following Strategic Principles: Give priority to addressing urgent public safety and public health needs; meeting legal requirements; maintaining and improving vital business processes; exploiting available non-City resources for funding; and demonstrating quantifiable returns on investment. See Proposed IT Plan for FY2011-FY2016 at 12.

The Commission believes that the process for developing the City's annual IT plan can be further improved and respectfully makes the following recommendations:<sup>8</sup>

- Expand the plan to include all aspects of IT in Alexandria, including operational expenses (OpEx) as well as capital expenditures (CapEx). As a public document, the plan should include data analysis and resulting rationale for all projects and CapEx and OpEx —citizens should understand how their tax dollars are allocated. For example, the report section on pp. 28-55 should include the research that supports the CIP expenditures, as well as the data that supports the resulting operations expenditures. Any increase or savings should be explained;
- Make the plan a true top-down strategic planning document integrated with the City's strategic plan. For example, the *Departmental IT Staff Support* section on pp. 13-17 lists the staffing and technology in various departments. It should also tie the staff and technology allocations to the City's vision and goals for its citizens, but there is no indication that the staffing has been evaluated with the City's strategic plan in mind. The information is only an accounting of what currently exists;<sup>9</sup> and
- Require the plan to provide an annual assessment of the state of Information Technology in the City identifying any gaps and shortfalls in how IT is supporting the City's strategic goals.

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<sup>8</sup> The City has retained Plante & Moran to review and assess the City's IT operations. As part of their review, Plante and Moran conducted interviews with members of the Commission regarding the IT planning process during which the Commission's current and past recommendations were discussed.

<sup>9</sup> The Commission has recommended in previous reports that the ITS also adopt a top-down strategic planning approach -- in addition to the current bottoms up approach -- to develop the annual IT plan. This would require a restatement of the overall goals of the plan that are derived from the City's strategic plan.