

City Of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 14, 2008
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 28 : PROPOSED LOTUS NOTES MIGRATION PROJECT

In response to Councilman Wilson's budget worksession question, the project to migrate from the City's Lotus Notes/Domino e-mail system to Microsoft Office/Exchange starting in FY 2011 was initiated for three reasons;

- 1) Concern that IBM which covers Lotus Notes is not investing the necessary funds to upgrade the Lotus Notes project which is a typical sign that at some point a software product will be phased out. Gartner Research reports that the sales of Lotus Notes have been "virtually flat since 2001" and that Notes/Domino infrastructures have been "too monolithic and proprietary for the rest of IBM to embrace, and not ready for the emerging world of service-oriented architectures." IBM is pushing a new product called "Workplace" that they hope will reignite the growth of its desktop products, and want to use the technology to complete more broadly in desktop markets. IBM also has just released Lotus Notes 8.0 which ITS staff will be reviewing.
2) To eliminate the need to maintain two separate database management and operating systems so that the City can fully utilize the experience, skills and training of the IT staff, instead of relying extensively on expensive contractor support. The City has been unsuccessful in recruiting and/or retaining expert Lotus Notes administrators and programmers during the last 8 years. The current e-mail manager position has been vacant since last August and has been covered by a contractor. While the private sector is a large user of Lotus Notes, government is not. Only two federal agencies still use Lotus Notes, and very few local governments.
3) To take advantage of the discounts on licenses, upgrades and services realized by our neighboring jurisdictions by using the whole Microsoft suite, instead of everything except their e-mail system. Since this work would not begin until FY 2011 and vendors' prices and plans change frequently, it is impossible to formulate accurate cost comparisons at this time.

While the above problems with Lotus Notes are real, the fact that the Lotus Notes system currently works well, is reliable, and would cost \$2.0 million to replace, all the reasons that the timing of possible replacement would not start until FY 2011 at the earliest. If the current situation deteriorates by FY 2011 we may need to start replacing Lotus Notes. If the current situation remains relatively unchanged by FY 2011, given the \$2.0 million estimated Lotus Notes replacement cost, it is likely that we would shift replacement out to FY 2013 or later. By having it in the mid-years of the CIP, it serves as a placeholder on a major City system that has significant uncertainty.