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REPORT TO CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT BOARD MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2024

SUBJECT **Establishment of Bilateral Agreements with Municipalities in the Capital Regional District to Facilitate Implementation of Next Generation 9-1-1**

ISSUE SUMMARY

The Government of Canada has mandated the transition of analog emergency telecommunications across the country to the digital Next Generation 9-1-1 system by March 2025. In order to meet this deadline, the Capital Regional District (CRD) needs to establish bilateral agreements with municipalities in the region by May 31, 2024 to allow the Public Safety Answer Points (PSAP) centres to complete their necessary technical and operational preparations to be compliant in time for the transition.

BACKGROUND

In 1988, the CRD was the first place in North America to implement Enhanced 9-1-1. The service established at the time provided for the regional district to administer 9-1-1 Call Answer under Bylaw No. 2468. This Bylaw created the function of financing, installation, operation and maintenance of a 9-1-1 emergency response telephone service. TELUS is the network provider for most of the existing legacy Basic 9-1-1 (B9-1-1) and Enhanced 9-1-1 (E9-1-1) service in British Columbia (BC). In February 2017, the CRD entered into a contract with E-Comm to deliver E9-1-1 services for the region.

The Government of Canada has mandated a move, through the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), from the existing analog telephone systems to digital (internet protocol-based) communication networks for 9-1-1 calls across the country. The new system, called Next Generation 9-1-1 or NG9-1-1, will improve emergency communications and response for the public and emergency responders. NG9-1-1 will improve the public's access to emergency response services by allowing 9-1-1 (PSAP) centres to exchange additional data and information with responders beyond voice communications, improve call processing times, enhance situational awareness, and increase responder safety. The current 9-1-1 system is scheduled to be decommissioned in March 2025.

In BC, TELUS is the Emergency Services IP Network (ESInet) provider, the network architecture upon which NG9-1-1 will operate. The CRD has an executed agreement with TELUS for access to these systems but with the introduction of NG9-1-1, TELUS requires regional districts to sign new agreements to meet certain requirements of NG9-1-1. These agreements, called Local Governing Authority (LGA) Agreements (Appendix A), set out the responsibilities of TELUS and the regional districts regarding NG9-1-1. E-Comm has stated that without these agreements in place by May 31, 2024, the PSAPs including E-Comm will be unable to undertake necessary preparatory actions to meet the March 2025 deadline (Appendix B).

These agreements require that the CRD, as the responsible regional district, guarantee that all the PSAPs that provide service to the region are compliant with the CRTC NG9-1-1 technical requirements. The challenge that is faced is that there are a number of PSAPs named in the TELUS agreement, such as Surrey Fire and Campbell River Fire Dispatch centres, that are contracted individually by the local authorities and with which the CRD, as the responsible LGA,

legally does not have any contractual agreements and therefore no oversight ability to ensure compliance. This issue has prevented many regional districts from being able to sign the current TELUS LGA agreements as presented. The CRD and the other unsigned regional districts have been working with TELUS since the Fall of 2022 to find solutions to this impasse to no avail.

It has been recommended that the responsible regional districts establish bilateral agreements with all local authorities that provide emergency services in their geographic areas that would empower the regional districts to sign definitive agreements with TELUS for NG9-1-1 while addressing the responsibilities and accountabilities related to the inter-dependencies. This would ensure that any future agreements that any municipality may enter into with other PSAP providers will meet compliance requirements with TELUS as required by the CRTC.

Currently, Metro Vancouver is working with TELUS to draft bilateral agreements for their municipal partners and these may serve as a template to assist a similar exercise in the CRD.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

That staff be directed to develop and enter into bilateral agreements with local authorities to allow the Capital Regional District to sign the Local Governing Authority Agreement with TELUS for Next Generation 9-1-1 implementation.

Alternative 2

That this report be referred back to staff for additional information based on Capital Regional District Board direction.

IMPLICATIONS

Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities

The proposed activity aligns with the following Board and Corporate priorities:

- 5a Influence regional issues and advocate in a consistent, focused way that aligns with the Board strategic priorities
- 9a Goal: Effective emergency management
- 16g Goal: Public safety & emergency response

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

This activity aligns with current plans to implement NG9-1-1 services to the CRD.

Financial Implications

While the final additional costs related to the mandatory transition of local PSAPs to NG9-1-1 is not clearly defined at this point, all PSAPs have been aware of and planning for the transition for many years. The CRD has established contingency funds specifically dedicated to facilitating the transition and to ensure no additional financial impacts during the implementation process.

Intergovernmental Implications

The establishment and signing of the bilateral agreements between the CRD and municipalities will ensure that local authorities maintain the ability to enter into agreements with PSAPs that they believe are in the best interest to serve the needs of their communities while allowing the CRD to sign the LGA Agreement with TELUS that would allow the implementation of NG9-1-1 in the region.

Service Delivery Implications

The implementation of NG9-1-1 services to the region will significantly enhance the ability for PSAPs to serve the emergency needs of the region while improving responder safety. If the signing of the LGA Agreement with TELUS is delayed past May 31, 2024 then it will likely mean that E-Comm and other PSAPs serving the region will be unable to meet the CRTC mandated March 2025 deadline for NG9-1-1 implementation.

Social Implications

The upgrading of the emergency call answer services in the region to meet NG9-1-1 is an expectation of the public and failure to meet mandated deadlines for implementation will likely lead to reputational damage.

CONCLUSION

It is necessary for the CRD to develop and enter into bilateral agreements with all local authorities that provide emergency services in the region to allow the CRD to sign the LGA Agreement with TELUS. This will ensure that the PSAPs serving the emergency call answer and dispatch needs of the region are able to undertake necessary preparations to the mandatory transition deadlines for NG9-1-1 implementation.

RECOMMENDATION

That staff be directed to develop and enter into bilateral agreements with local authorities to allow the Capital Regional District to sign the Local Governing Authority Agreement with TELUS for Next Generation 9-1-1 implementation.

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ATTACHMENTS

- Appendix A: TELUS Local Governing Authority Agreement
- Appendix B: E-Comm Letter