

STAFF REPORT
City of Lancaster, California

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Date: February 24, 2009

To: Mayor Parris and City Council Members

From: Kelvin Tainatongo, Assistant to the City Manager

Subject: Los Angeles Radio Interoperable Communications System
(LA-RICS) Joint Powers Agreement (JPA)

Recommendation:

Adopt **Resolution No. 09-10**, a resolution of the City Council of the City of Lancaster, California, approving the Los Angeles Regional Interoperable Communications System (LA-RICS) Project Joint Powers Agreement (JPA), authorizing the City's membership in the L.A. RICS authority. Authorize City Manager, or designee, to execute the JPA Agreement.

Fiscal Impact:

None at this time

Background:

Following the events of September 11, 2001, the National 9-11 Commission, in its report to Congress and the President, identified a very serious weakness in our various metropolitan areas' ability to respond to regional crises and disaster-type events: the lack of interoperable communications. As a result, a steering committee was created to further the creation of a "Los Angeles Regional Interoperable Communications System" (LA-RICS) for the purpose of developing and implementing a modern, integrated wireless voice and data communications system that will support the communication needs of the more than 34,000 first responders and local mission-critical personnel within the Los Angeles county region.

The idea behind the project is to have a county-wide public safety communications system that allows for improved communications among the various public safety agencies that operate in the region. Currently, local and regional police and fire departments do not have inherent capabilities for inter-agency communications. While ad hoc and other significant, locally designed systems (such as the Interagency Communications Interoperability System or "ICIS") provide some interagency communications, a true county-wide system does not exist. A major concern is that in the event of a significant disaster or calamity, when inter-agency communication is most needed, the current system(s) will not allow for sufficient coordination between the various law enforcement and fire departments that operate in the County.

Summary:

Joint Powers Agreement - For the past two and one-half years, the LA-RICS Steering Committee, consisting of county-wide principal stakeholders, including city manager representatives from the California Contract Cities and Independent Cities Associations, has been meeting to review the technical and governance issues associated with maintaining and operating such a system for the benefit of all communities in Los Angeles County. The LA-RICS Steering Committee is now recommending a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) that will form the LA-RICS Authority that will include the establishment of a Board of Directors to oversee LA-RICS operations. Recently both the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and the Los Angeles City Council have approved and executed the JPA. The JPA approval process requires that cities wishing to become “Member Cities” must approve the JPA document within 45 days following both the County’s and City of Los Angeles’ execution of the JPA.

JPA KEYPOINTS

Under the JPA, the Authority will possess the following powers related to LA-RICS:

- To make and enter into contracts, including but not limited to, agreements for the purpose of acquiring real and/or personal property, equipment, employment contracts and professional services agreements;
- To make and enter into contracts with subscribing agencies who desire to utilize the System for their primary radio communications or affiliates who desire to utilize the System only for mutual and/or automatic aid;
- To acquire, construct, maintain, and operate a telecommunications systems or service and to provide the equipment necessary to deliver public services thereby;
- To apply for, receive and utilize grants and loans from federal, state or local governments or from any other available source in order to pursue the purposes of the Authority;

Funding Plan - In order to encourage maximum participation by all cities in Los Angeles county, the JPA is set up so that no financial commitments will be required of participating Member Cities until such time that the newly established Board of Directors adopts a funding plan identifying short and long term capital and operations & maintenance requirements. It is anticipated that the funding plan will be developed within nine months following the Authority’s establishment. All of the Authority’s members will have the opportunity to participate in the development of the funding plan and to identify and assess members’ various abilities to contribute resources, including financial, staffing, equipment, infrastructure or other contributions. If, at any time prior to the adoption of the funding plan, a Member agency feels that it cannot contribute the identified resources or that it would not be in its best interests to continue participating in the system, that agency may terminate its membership without financial contribution or penalty.

While initial estimates indicate that LA-RICS will cost between \$485 million and \$630 million, the actual cost to implement LA-RICS will not be known until an RFP for the build-out of the system is released and bids are received. To the fullest extent possible, grant funding will be sought to fund this project; in fact, the regional stakeholders have agreed that 60 percent of all Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant funding for the region will be dedicated to LA-RICS. Thus far, the Steering Committee has spent over \$9 million in Los Angeles City and County funds toward the development of the LA-RICS system. Nonetheless, despite the expected availability of future UASI and other grants, undoubtedly, additional financial resources will be needed to complete funding of LA-RICS. Member agencies will be able to take part in the development of the funding plan, which will give them the opportunity, as stated above, to terminate its membership without financial contribution or penalty if such Member agency feels that it cannot contribute the identified resources.

It is important to note that the Los Angeles County Sheriff's and Fire Departments have been significantly involved in the creation of the LA-RICS system and that Sheriff Baca and Fire Chief Freeman have both, personally, participated on the Steering Committee engaged in the technical and governance aspects of the LA-RICS' formation. Notwithstanding these Departments' roles as law enforcement and fire protection service providers for the contracting cities, we should not view the Sheriff's and Fire Departments involvement as a surrogate for our interests on the LA-RICS Authority. Despite being a contract city, we still maintain an overall legal responsibility to ensure our community's health and safety and communications needs. In addition, there may be times that the City's interests differ from the County's; we are in a better position to determine our level of participation and resource contribution to the LA-RICS Authority; and we may have technical contributions, such as radio frequencies, that could, at some future point, be incorporated into the LA-RICS system where we would want to ensure our input on how those contributions are best utilized, when needed.

Attachments:

Resolution No. 09-10

Joint Powers Agreement (Available for review in the City Clerk's Office)