

From: **"Levitt, Karen"**

To: **"Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"**

Date: 2/27/2024 6:42:52 AM

Subject: E-Comm Updates

Attachments: E-Comm Feb Update for Police and Local Government Partners.pdf
E-Comm Transformation Update - Feb 2024.pdf

Dear Council,

Attached is (1) E-Comm's February 2024 update, and (2) an overview of the progress E-Comm has made over 2023 against its multi-year transformation plan, demonstrating substantial service and efficiency improvements. Both are provided for your information.

Thanks,

Karen

Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager (she/her)

The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the x̱məθḵəy̱əm/Musqueam, S̱kw̱wú7mesh/Squamish and səliwətaʔ/Tsleil-Waututh nations

E-COMM FEBRUARY UPDATE FOR POLICE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTNERS

We are writing to share with you our monthly update on key activities at E-Comm to strengthen and improve our services on behalf of our police and local government partners, and the public we serve.

Service level update:

- *9-1-1 and police emergency call-taking service levels remain strong* – In keeping with the historical trend of relatively lower call volumes and higher staffing levels during the first quarter, 9-1-1 service levels were 98% in January (target: 95% of calls answered within 5 seconds). Police emergency call-taking service levels were 97% in the Lower Mainland and 94% on the Island (target: 88% of calls answered within 10 seconds).
- *Lower Mainland police non-emergency (NER) call-taking service levels continue to improve* – Lower Mainland police NER service levels were 88% in January (target: 80% of calls answered within 3 minutes), and the abandoned call rate was 12% (versus 22% in January 2023), due in part to a 14% decrease in NER call volumes from January 2023, and also aided by the onboarding of more dedicated NER call takers in November. On the Island, NER service levels were 75%, due to a smaller staff that is therefore more impacted by changes in sick leaves.
- *A caution on service levels* – Service levels fluctuate through the year, based on call volumes and staffing levels, and typically decrease as summer approaches. Police NER service levels will remain under pressure until our transformation improvements are fully implemented.

Other Transformation updates:

- *Additional dedicated NER call takers to strengthen service levels* – We are onboarding our fourth intake of new dedicated NER call-takers in February, and are also expanding the coverage-hours of our NER call-takers to 7am to 11pm, to further improve capacity.
- *Revised schedule for new Genesys NER contact centre platform* – We have moved the implementation of our new Genesys call-handling technology platform to late spring, to allow more time for one of our police partners to complete their privacy assessment. This new system will improve the caller experience by enabling wait-time estimates and call-back options.
- *Amelia.ai NER digital agent pilot update* – Our NER digital agent pilot with Vancouver Police has helped to provide better data insights on caller activity and reasons for NER calls. With the planned implementation of our new NER contact-centre platform, we will transition the VPD NER interactive voice response from Amelia to Genesys, and will take the lessons learned from this pilot to develop an overall digital strategy for non-emergency calls.
- *NER Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) harmonization now completed* – We implemented our final batch of harmonized NER SOPs in January. Assisted by our police agency partners, we reduced and harmonized the over 1,500 different SOPs we previously followed across agencies in answering NER calls, down to 96. This will help to improve call-handling and answer times.
- *Launch of new police dispatcher training and peer coach program* – To address ongoing shortages of police dispatchers, we are launching a program to help accelerate training.
- *E-Comm Governance Review ongoing* – Interviews with key partners have been conducted, led by Deloitte, and recommendations will be developed for our board's consideration by April.

E-Comm 9-1-1 FEBRUARY 2024 UPDATE

MORE POLICE CALL TAKERS



12 MORE NON-EMERGENCY CALL TAKERS BEING ONBOARDED IN FEB.



NEW DISPATCH PEER COACH ROLE WILL HELP TRAIN MORE DISPATCHERS

POLICE NON-EMERGENCY IMPROVEMENTS



NEW "GENESYS" NER CONTACT CENTRE TECHNOLOGY PLATFORM TO LAUNCH IN LATE SPRING



LEARNINGS FROM "AMELIA.AI" DIGITAL AGENT PILOT WILL HELP GUIDE NER DIGITAL STRATEGY



NER "STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE" HARMONIZATION COMPLETED, WITH OVER 1,500 SOPS REDUCED TO 96.

JANUARY YEAR-TO-DATE SERVICE LEVELS

LOWER MAINLAND

VANCOUVER ISLAND

| | Target | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 9-1-1 | 95%/5s | 94% | 99% | 98% | 94% | 99% | 98% |
| Police Emergency | 88%/10s | 81% | 93% | 97% | 93% | 90% | 94% |
| Police Non-Emergency | 80%/180s | 50% | 69% | 88% | 93% | 81% | 75% |
| Fire Emergency | 90%/15s | 89% | 95% | 91% | | | |

Note, detailed quarterly service level results will be provided in E-Comm Q1 update.



E-Comm 9-1-1
2023 Transformation Progress Update
February 2024

INTRODUCTION

In November 2022, the E-Comm 9-1-1 Board of Directors approved a comprehensive new transformation plan and budget, to modernize and put our operations on a solid foundation for the future. The five-year plan is intended to address long-standing challenges in our operations, and in every part of our organization, by providing – for the first time – dedicated funding, staff and capacity to implement needed improvements. A primary focus is on stabilizing and improving our call-taking and dispatch services for our police agency partners.

This update is intended to inform our local government and agency partners, and the public we all serve, of our progress in our first year of implementing the plan, the positive results to date and our focus on continuing to make improvements for the benefit of the public, our partners and our people.

2023 IN BRIEF – A YEAR OF SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS

2023 has been a year of significant improvements and progress in the transformation of every aspect of our operations and services. We are turning the corner from past challenges in our operations, staffing and service levels, and achieved our best service levels in the last five years in the key areas of 9-1-1 and police emergency call taking.

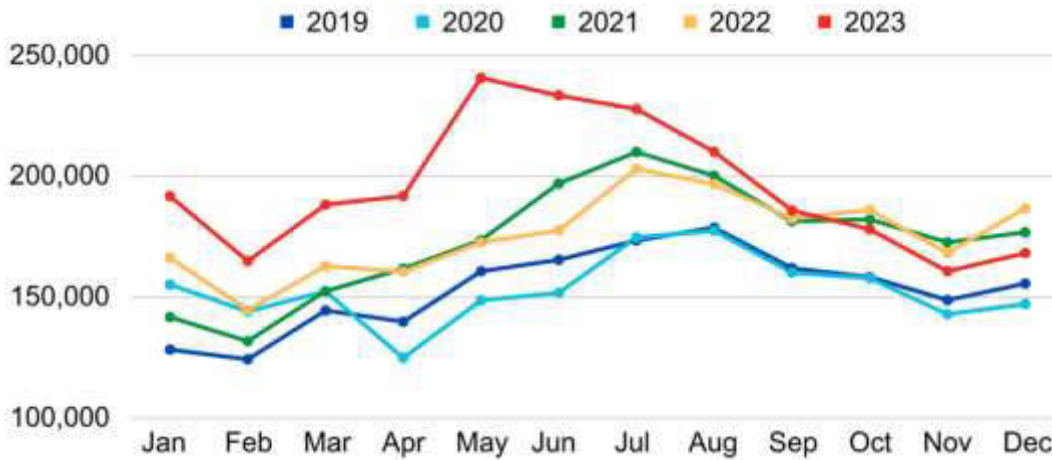
We have also begun to implement improvements, detailed below, in our people and culture supports, as well as technology and corporate capabilities, that will further strengthen our operations for the future.

THE NEED FOR CHANGE

Like our public safety counterparts around the world, E-Comm is facing challenges that require us to re-evaluate how we deliver our services, including: significant growth in 9-1-1 call volumes, driven by a growing and ageing population and the adoption of smartphones and call-enabled devices; acute shortages of qualified staff; and increased technology costs to keep pace with advances in how calls are managed. Other factors include more frequent and larger-scale climate emergencies, the opioid overdose crisis, a homeless challenge and mental health-related incidents.

An independent review conducted in 2021 by PwC Canada, and in which representatives of our police agency partners participated, concluded E-Comm was understaffed by approximately 125 front-line operations positions. It identified operational inefficiencies, gaps in key capabilities, and needed technology improvements. Importantly, PwC also warned that the future cost of attaining service level targets would be unsupportable not just in terms of money, but also securing sufficient staff, if our existing operations and technology were not modernized.

Total B.C. 9-1-1 calls up 11% in 2023



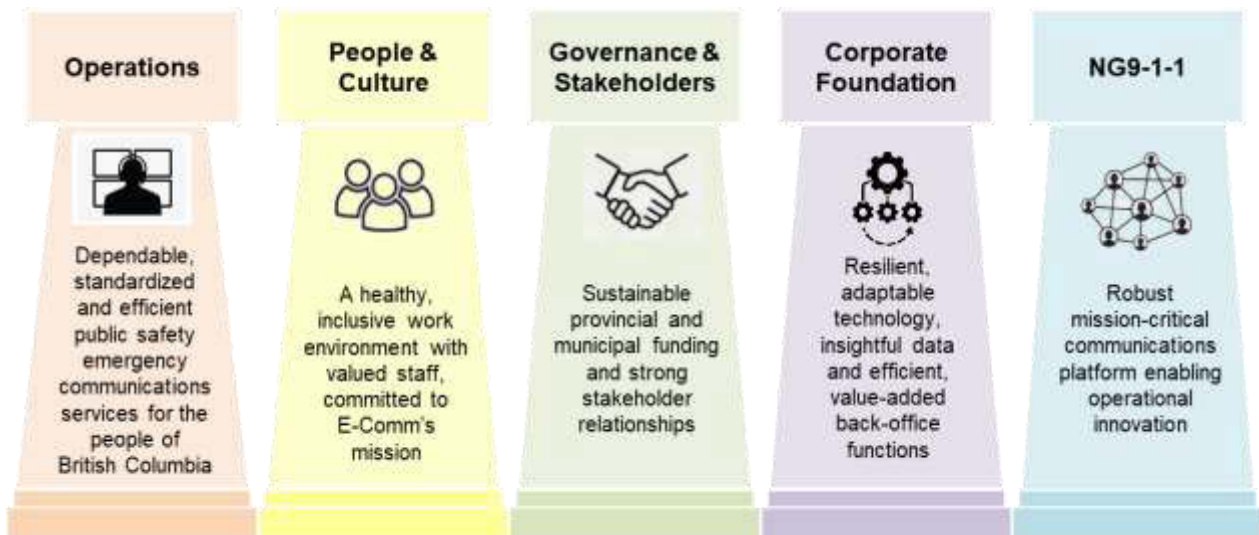
OVERALL OBJECTIVES – SUSTAINABLE SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

In response to these pressures, the transformation plan is focussed on three core outcomes:

1. achieve service level targets and improve public experience;
2. build a sustainable organization; and
3. stabilize financials and have predictable, consistent cost-to-serve.

The plan addresses five strategic pillars: Operations; People and Culture; Governance and Stakeholders; Corporate Foundation; and Next Generation 9-1-1. Objectives of each are summarized in the infographic. More information at: www.ecomm911.ca/transformation-plan.

Transformation Plan objectives



PROGRESS ON SERVICE LEVELS

As a result of improvements begun in 2023, service levels are strengthening:

- **Best 9-1-1 service levels in 5 years** – Despite a significant 11% increase in 9-1-1 call volumes in 2023, E-Comm’s service level for 9-1-1 call taking exceeded target (95% of calls answered within 5 seconds), at 98% provincewide. We are delivering consistent, reliable 9-1-1 service to the citizens of British Columbia.
- **Best Lower Mainland police emergency (ER) service levels in five years** – E-Comm’s 2023 service levels for police emergency call-taking were above target (88% of calls answered within 10 seconds) in the Lower Mainland for the first time in five years, at 89%, and on target on Vancouver Island.
- **Significantly improved Lower Mainland police non-emergency (NER) service levels** – Year-end police NER results remained on target on Vancouver Island (80% of calls answered within 3 minutes), and significantly improved in the Lower Mainland at 63%, up from 44% in 2022.
- **Reduction in Lower Mainland NER abandoned call rates** – Our 2023 abandoned call rate for police NER calls over 3 minutes was 13% in the Lower Mainland, down from 26% in 2022; and 6% on Vancouver Island, the same as in 2022. Our Lower Mainland average speed to answer improved to 4 minutes from almost 11 minutes in 2022, and we answered 61,000 more calls.
- **Best fire emergency (ER) service levels in five years** – Likewise, E-Comm’s 2023 service levels for fire emergency call-taking were above target (90% of calls answered within 15 seconds), and the highest in five years.

Lower Mainland Service Levels

| | Target | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|-----------------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 9-1-1 | 95%/5s | 97% | 98% | 92% | 98% | 98% |
| Police Emergency | 88%/10s | 81% | 86% | 83% | 85% | 89% |
| Police Non-Emergency | 80%/180s | 61% | 67% | 55% | 44% | 63% |
| Fire Emergency | 90%/15s | 87% | 92% | 90% | 88% | 93% |

Vancouver Island Service Levels

| | Target | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|----------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 9-1-1 | 95%/5s | 97% | 98% | 92% | 98% | 98% |
| Police Emergency | 88%/10s | 79% | 88% | 90% | 88% | 88% |
| Police Non-Emergency | 80%/180s | 68% | 81% | 87% | 79% | 80% |

IMPROVEMENTS TO POLICE NON-EMERGENCY CALL TAKING

- Dedicated police NER call takers** – Until now, most non-emergency calls were answered by police call takers who also answered emergency calls. Because call takers must prioritize emergency calls when volumes increase, non-emergency service levels deteriorate. In response, E-Comm has created a dedicated non-emergency call-taker role, with recruitment of 36 positions completed in 2023. This role recognizes the different skill-sets required for handling emergency versus non-emergency calls, and opens up a larger pool of potential candidates. These agents now answer over 60% of all NER calls.
- NER Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) harmonization** – We collaborated with our police partners to harmonize SOPs across agencies for the 96 different NER “call types” that we answer, reducing call taking complexity, which will help to improve call-handling times, reduce training time, and strengthen quality assurance.
- Enhancements to online alternatives for reporting NER incidents** – We have also worked with our police partners to improve websites for reporting of NER crimes, as an alternative to NER calls.
- New NER contact centre technology platform to go live in 2024** – Our new Genesys “Contact Centre as a Service” technology platform will further improve the caller experience by enabling wait-time estimates and call-back options, improved call menus and information, and SMS and call-transfer capabilities. It will also help to provide better data on the reasons for calls. This is part of our strategy to use technology to improve the public’s experience.
- Digital agent pilot** – Working with the Vancouver Police Department, E-Comm launched a digital agent pilot in May 2023, using Amelia.ai technology. The intent of this pilot was to gather better data on reasons for calls and help redirect callers to an appropriate agency if the call is not a police non-emergency matter. We will be taking lessons learned from this pilot to develop an overall digital strategy for non-emergency calls, including exploring different ways for the public to report crimes.

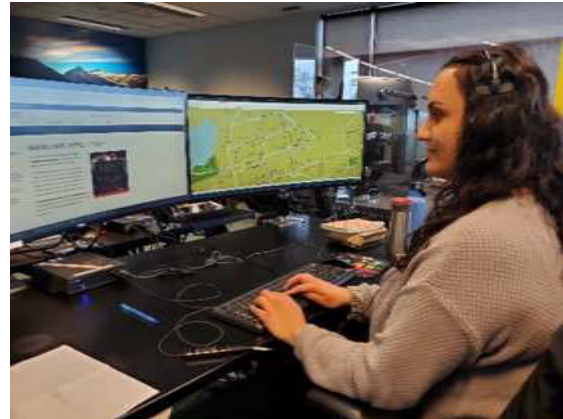
OTHER IMPROVEMENTS TO OPERATIONS

- **Ongoing recruitment to improve operations** – We hired over 170 external candidates, to address long-standing gaps, and get staffing levels closer to target.
- **Dedicated 9-1-1 queue agents** – We created a dedicated 9-1-1 operator role to stabilize the 9-1-1 queue, attract more candidates and reduce training time.
- **Improved training** – We implemented training improvements, to help improve employee success and retention by providing better on-the-job supports. These include an expanded “peer coach” training and mentoring program, as well as new training resources for people leaders.
- **Better shift options** – We have also developed alternate shift pattern offerings to allow for better work-life balance and better match staffing to call volumes and workload.

SUPPORTS FOR OUR PEOPLE AND CULTURE

Other improvements for our people include:

- **Collective bargaining agreement and compensation review** – We concluded a new collective bargaining agreement and compensation review, with market-competitive compensation and benefits to improve our ability to attract and retain great people.
- **Employee wellness supports** – We have implemented new Resilient Minds training and wellness supports, helping to keep our employees healthy and reduce rates of attrition and sick leave. For example, the leave rate for police call takers decreased last year from 17.3% in 2022 to 14.5% in the Lower Mainland, and from 9.4% to 5.7% on Vancouver Island.
- **Performance management framework** – We are implementing a new performance management framework, to improve engagement and feedback for employees.
- **Improved attrition and retention** – The result of these changes is an overall improvement in company-wide attrition rates, to 10.7% in 2023, from 13.6% in 2021. For our Dispatchers, the annual attrition rate was significantly reduced in the past year, from 10.1% in 2022 to 5% in the Lower Mainland, and from 27.6% to 19% on the Island.



NEXT GENERATION 9-1-1 IMPROVEMENTS

In March 2023, the Province of BC contributed \$90 million to E-Comm, to support the federally-mandated implementation of “Next Generation” 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) technology improvements. The program will move 9-1-1 voice calls to a new digital, IP-based network which is to be completed by March 1, 2025. This one-time funding to support the initial implementation of NG9-1-1 represents a significant avoided cost for our local government and agency partners, and E-Comm is pleased to have played a leadership role in working with the Province and local governments to help enable it.

E-Comm continues to work with governments at all levels, partner agencies, and a national committee of Canadian emergency call-taking agencies to make sure we have the necessary technology, tools, and operational funding in place to be ready for this change. Find out more about NG9-1-1 at: <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/phone/911/gen.htm>

OTHER TECHNOLOGY AND CORPORATE IMPROVEMENTS

- **Data centre resiliency and cybersecurity projects on track** – We continue work on our new data centre resiliency and cybersecurity projects to strengthen protections against cyber threats and data breaches.
- **Improvements to data analytics to better support our agency partners** – We are implementing significant improvements to automate and enhance our data analytics and reporting to help identify opportunities to improve operations and provide our partners with better data.
- **Comprehensive governance review underway** – We have launched a comprehensive review of our corporate and governance structure to identify opportunities for improvement. We are engaging our local government and agency partners in this review, which is to be completed in 2024.



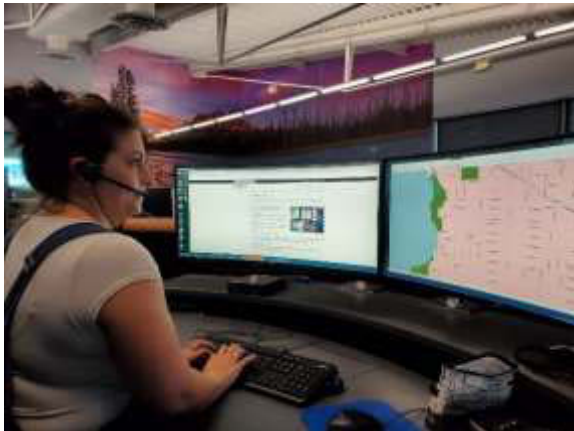
PROGRESS TOWARDS A NEW PROVINCIAL MANDATE FOR 9-1-1

In September 2023, local governments endorsed a special resolution at the Union of BC Municipalities convention, calling for a new provincial mandate for 9-1-1 services in B.C., including new provincewide service standards, governance model and provincial funding, through a levy on monthly cell phone bills.

E-Comm is very supportive of these efforts to strengthen the governance and funding of 9-1-1 services in B.C., which are currently the responsibility of regional districts. To date, there has been a lack of consistent, provincewide policies and service standards, creating inequities between urban and rural, remote and Indigenous communities.

E-Comm will continue to work with the Province and our local government and agency partners to advance this important priority in 2024.

CONCLUSION – LOOKING AHEAD TO 2024



While E-Comm has made significant improvements and progress in 2023, we recognize that there is still much work to do, and our transformation has only just begun. Challenges remain, including increased call volumes, aging infrastructure and technology, the need for reasonable and predictable costs, ongoing labour shortages, and staffing levels that are still below what's needed in key areas.

As we continue enhancements to our police communication operations, we are also improving our corporate infrastructure, upgrading and leveraging new technologies, and improving the efficiencies of our processes, and focusing on the successful implementation of NG9-1-1, a critical, mandated technological and operational change. We are also working to ensure more sustainable and predictable costs for our partners in 2024. Finally, and most importantly, we will continue to support our people who play such an important role in public safety communication in BC.

We have the plan, the people, the resources and support of our partners to continue the momentum we have begun in 2023. We are grateful to our exceptional staff, and our local government and agency partners, for helping to enable our progress to date. And we look forward to keeping you updated on our progress in 2024.

For more information on any of these initiatives, please contact the E-Comm Public Affairs team at: communications@ecomm911.ca.