

MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

c/o Novato Fire Protection District
95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945
PHONE: (415) 878-2690 FAX: (415) 878-2660
WWW.MERAONLINE.ORG

DATE: May 15, 2013
TO: MERA Governing Board
FROM: Maureen Cassingham, Executive Officer
SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM **E-3 (b1)**: ANNUAL REVIEW OF MERA STRATEGIC PLAN-
PROPOSED ADMINISTRATIVE AND
OPERATIONS UPDATE

Recommended Action: Upon Executive Board recommendation, accept the Annual Review of MERA Strategic Plan - Proposed Administrative and Operations Updates.

Background: Due to 2012 calendar year ending workload, the annual review of MERA's Strategic Plan was postponed to the May 2013 Executive and Governing Board meetings. The following are administrative and operations updates on the Plan's original "Seven Strategic Directions for MERA". The MERA Project Oversight Subcommittee reviewed the administrative update on April 24, 2013 and directed it be forwarded to the Executive Board along with the attached Operations Officer Report.

1. MERA's Mission

MERA's Mission Statement was adopted with the Board of Directors' approval of the Strategic Plan on December 8, 2010.

2. Changes to MERA's Governance Structure

Amendment No. 5 to MERA's JPA, along with companion revisions to MERA's Bylaws was unanimously adopted by the MERA Board of Directors on June 20, 2012. The new governance structure of the nine-member Executive Board, with final authority retained by the 25-member Governing Board, was implemented within the 18-month timeline of Plan adoption.

3. System Technology Replacement Plan Development

This direction is updated in the attached report from Operations Officer Tackabery, Attachment E-3 (b-2).

4. Long-Term Funding Plan

A new Sustainability Subcommittee, a subset of the MERA Finance Committee, was created to work on the long-term funding plan for the Next Gen System. To reduce the number of meetings, the Subcommittee was folded back into the Finance Committee on March 9, 2011. The Finance Committee now reviews both short-term (current system) and long-term (Next Gen System) capital funding. Key elements of the long-term plan are in place or are being fine-tuned, including a project budget, analysis of funding options with special focus on a County-wide parcel tax and grant-writing services to secure Federal and State funds for the project.

A parcel tax study, which is a critical part of the project financing plan, is being performed with an estimated completion date of June 30, 2013. Short-term capital needs are being funded by MERA Reserves and grants secured by the County of Marin. The original goal of 18 months from Strategic Plan adoption to complete these plans should be extended through 2013.

5. Public Education and Outreach Plan

Per the charge of the MERA Outreach Subcommittee, member and public education consultants Price and Mullen were engaged to help develop a MERA Outreach Plan, member workshop and video, FAQs and Fact Sheet, facilitate and oversee a public opinion survey on MERA and the Next Gen System, develop an online member newsletter and initiate website changes. The MERA Governing Board participated in the January 16 Workshop on the Next Gen System and approved the Outreach Plan as well as a Resolution permitting reimbursement of project costs from tax proceeds.

Part-time contract staff, including a Special Project Manager and Special Project Administrative Assistant, will be added by mid-May 2013 to support and advance member and public education initiatives leading to the successful passage of a parcel tax to fund the capital costs of the Next Gen System.

6. Expanding Partnerships

Implementation of Directions #6 and #7 are MERA's next priorities. The Finance and Project Oversight Committees discussed reaching out to other non-member public agencies in the County such as sanitary and other special districts to join the JPA. Active outreach and follow-up on these discussions are planned subsequent to the November 14 Ballot Measure.

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Cross-promotion between MERA members via the website “Links Project” is nearing completion.

Exploring partnerships with the private sector lies ahead. Timeline for this direction was two years after Plan adoption or December 2012. This timeline should be extended to December 2015.

7. Strengthening the Common Bonds of the Membership

The MERA Executive Board created a Coverage Committee of MERA Executive Board members, Operations Officer, Executive Officer and DPW Staff in September 2012 to work directly and proactively with MERA members on coverage and other system service issues.

Considerable effort has been made to reach out to Stinson Beach and Inverness to identify short-term work-arounds, provide preventive equipment maintenance and upgrades and recommend long-term solutions to address user needs. These efforts are in addition to those of the Operational Issues Work Group who advise and provide field user input to MERA’s Operations Officer.

Improved internal communications between members and MERA staff noted under Directions 5 and 6 should help facilitate more timely responses to member needs and the development of viable solutions.

ATTACHMENT: E-3 (b-2) Annual Review of MERA Strategic Plan –
Operations Update (Tackabery)