



Staff Report to Council

DATE: Tuesday, May 20, 2025
DEPARTMENT: Administration
SUBJECT: E-Comm 911 Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

E-Comm 911 provides 911 call answer and Police dispatch services within the province, including throughout Langford and the West Shore. Since 2019, the Province has been funding the Police dispatch service after it was transferred from the Langford Dispatch Centre to E-Comm. However, effective April 1, 2025, ten municipalities on Southern Vancouver Island are required to assume their respective costs for this service. Langford's share of the levy is approximately \$1.3 million for the 9-month period of April 1 to December 31, 2025. If Council does not approve the proposed agreement, 911 services will no longer be provided to residents within Langford's municipal boundaries.

BACKGROUND:

Until February of 2019, 911 dispatch services for police was provided out of the Langford Dispatch Centre at the Westshore Detachment. With the requirement to move to NextGen technology, many municipalities were strongly encouraged to move to E-Comm 911, which now handles 99% of the 911 calls for the province¹. In 2019, RCMP dispatch for the West Shore was moved to E-Comm 911 dispatch services, a corporation operated on a not-for-profit/cost recovery basis owned by lower mainland municipalities, police boards and other public bodies¹. Fire dispatch services are not provided by E-Comm but through the fire dispatch service in Surrey.

From the time of transition to E-Comm 911 in 2019 until March 31, 2025, the Province paid the cost of the dispatch services. As of April 1, 2025, the Province has offloaded a portion of the total costs directly onto 10 municipalities on Southern Vancouver Island: Colwood, North Cowichan, Duncan, North Saanich, Ladysmith, Sidney, Langford, Sooke, Metchosin and View Royal.

E-Comm 911 has provided Langford with a contract for the period April 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025, to allow for the services to continue while the parties negotiate a new, longer-term agreement. If the

¹ Information taken from E-Comm's website

City does not enter into an agreement with E-Comm, there is a risk that Police Dispatch services could be discontinued within the Langford boundaries. The terms which have been presented are the same as those presented to the other impacted municipalities.

COMMENTARY:

All of the affected municipalities have protested the additional downloading of costs by the Province with no success to date. Further, some of the terms of the proposed contract are vague and attempts to negotiate changes have had limited success. Staff are recommending that the City accept the proposed terms for 2025 with a view to working with the other municipalities on developing an agreement that meets the City's long-term requirements for accountability and fiscal responsibility.

The proposed agreement requires the City to pay an estimated levy of \$1,275,250 in 2025. However, the agreement does not provide any information with respect to how the amount has been determined. Discussions with E-Comm indicate that this amount is based on the authorized strength, (the number of officers authorized by the City), but no details on the calculation have been forthcoming. Staff are recommending that any future agreement provides a funding formula that is based not only on the number of officers but also on the number of calls received from Langford. Additionally, staff are recommending that any future agreement requires E-Comm 911 to provide regular reporting on performance, including statistics such as the number of calls received from Langford and the average length of time it takes for calls to be answered and processed. As the previous contract was directly with the Province, the City has not received historical reporting on the above noted statistics.

There are currently no other options with respect to RCMP dispatch; this is a service that must remain available to all citizens. The ten affected municipalities have been speaking regularly, and they will work collaboratively to negotiate a contract that meets the needs of their citizens and that provides clear accountability to E-Comm. While negotiating a new agreement, staff will also explore alternative options for police dispatch.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The levy for this year is nearly \$1.3 million. The Province has paid for the first quarter, even if there is no overall increase next year, the City would be paying an additional 25% to cover the costs for a full year. These amounts have been factored into the 2025-2029 Five Year Financial Plan.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Police dispatch is a mandatory service. The City does not have the infrastructure or equipment to provide dispatch services directly.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

Collaborative Advocacy

OPTIONS:

Option 1

THAT Council authorize the Mayor and CAO or Corporate Officer to enter into an agreement with E-Comm 911 for the provision of police dispatch services on the terms as substantially attached, with such amendments as may be negotiated;

AND

Direct staff to enter negotiations with E-Comm 911 for an agreement for the provision of services beyond 2025, with such agreement to be brought back to Council for review;

AND

Direct staff to explore alternative options for the provision of police dispatch services together with other interested municipalities.

OR Option 2

THAT Council authorize the Mayor and CAO or Corporate Officer to enter into an agreement with E-Comm 911 for the provision of police dispatch services on the terms as substantially attached, with such amendments as may be negotiated.

SUBMITTED BY: Marie Watmough, Director of Legislative & Protective Services

Concurrence: Melisa Miles, Manager of Legislative Services

Concurrence: Donna Petrie, Senior Manager of Communications & Economic Development

Concurrence: Yari Nielsen, Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities

Concurrence: Matthew Baldwin, RPP, MCIP, Director of Development Services

Concurrence: Leah Stohmann, RPP, MCIP, Director of Community Planning and Climate Change

Concurrence: Katelyn Balzer, P.Eng., Director of Engineering and Public Works

Concurrence: Michael Dillabaugh, CPA, CA, Director of Finance

Concurrence: Marie Watmough, Director of Legislative & Protective Services

Concurrence: Braden Hutchins, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Concurrence: Darren Kiedyk, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments: Dispatch Services Agreement