

October 19, 2018

Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Blvd. Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Madam Chair & County Board Members,

The Arlington County Emergency Preparedness Advisory Commission (EPAC) is charged with advising the Arlington County Board on issues related to emergency planning, preparedness, and response and has identified several priorities for the County to consider as it plans to develop the FY2020 County budget.

**EPAC Priorities for FY2020:**

**1. Improvements to Staffing**

EPAC believes that public safety staffing may be inadequate to meet the daily demands for service, as well as larger incidents and disasters. Specifically, EPAC would like the Board to consider the following:

- Emergency Communication Center staffing: DPSCEM staff have long stated there are issues with maintaining adequate staffing, and stress challenges recruiting and retaining staff.
- Office of Emergency Management staffing: four (4) grant funded positions are expected to go away in two (2) years, yet the responsibilities are essential to maintain an adequate level of preparedness.
- Emergency Medical Technicians: The Fire Department should explore a separate EMS career path within to incentivize quality paramedics and emergency medical technicians to come and stay with the department. The department should also consider further exploring opportunities to enhance integration and utilization of state and/or nationally certified volunteer or other first responders.

**2. Enhanced Community Outreach**

Building a resilient county and region requires an informed and educated community. EPAC would like additional emphasis to be placed on finding ways to bolster information technology networks and communications pathways, to ensure that efficient, timely, and relevant information products, relating to emergency preparedness reach their intended audiences. Specifically, EPAC would like the County to consider increased support, including overall strategic planning, collaboration, and coordination, for the following programs:

- Stop the Bleed/Until Help Arrives
- Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)
- Active Shooter training for businesses and other organizations
- Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)
- Cherrydale Volunteer Fire Department (CVFD)
- Falls Church Volunteer Fire Department (FCVFD)

- Arlington Network for Community Readiness (ANChOR)

### **3. METRO Safety Upgrades**

EPAC has repeatedly called for improvements to the safety and security of Metro facilities. With Mr. Dorsey now a voting member and principal director on Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) board of directors, now is the time to call on Metro to provide a full accounting of the improvements made to infrastructure in Arlington, including the following:

- Improvements to public address systems.
- Improved visual communication capabilities (e.g. videoboards, improved signage) in case of emergencies in Metro tunnels.
- County pressure on WMATA to ensure that SafeTrack repairs within the County truly address the safety issues they are intended to solve.
- Improvements to emergency communication capabilities on platforms and in tunnels.

### **4. Focus on Disaster Recovery**

While many resources are dedicated to responding to emergencies and disasters, less attention is placed on our community's ability to quickly and sustainably recover from a large-scale emergency or disaster. EPAC would like the County to place additional emphasis on recovery, which could include the following:

- Perform an analysis of Arlington's capacity to recover from high-impact events.
- Review and update plans per National Disaster Recovery Framework and other lessons learned and best practices as appropriate.
- Host exercises that test recovery plans of events that would as well as additional resources for supporting not only public infrastructure restoration but enhancing the private sector's ability to recover as well.
- Train staff to perform the roles and responsibilities of Recovery Coordinator.

While this list is certainly not exhaustive, EPAC stresses, that by focusing on these four priority areas, we will enhance our ability to be a safe, secure, prepared, and resilient community for all. We look forward to working with the Board as well as with the County Manager, County departments and schools, etc. toward achieving these objectives.



Kim Klingler  
Chair  
Emergency Preparedness Advisory Commission (EPAC)