Metro Region ARMER Standards

Section 6 – Metro 6.5.0 Prioritizing Capital Spending
Date Established **4-09-03**
Date Revised/Reviewed **2-18-19**

1. **Purpose or Objective**
   To establish a policy that will provide criteria and a process for determining how the Metropolitan Emergency Services Board (MESB) spends its capital funds for the metropolitan region portion of the ARMER system.

2. **Technical Background**
   - **Capabilities**
     Capabilities are based on the current state of the art.
   - **Constraints**
     Subject to vendor availability of products and resources and the availability of capital funds.

3. **Operational Context**
   The MESB is empowered by statute to set its budget for capital improvements to the system. This standard provides a methodology for the Radio Technical Operations Committee (RTOC) to make recommendations to the MESB in determining priorities and timing for such expenditures.

4. **Recommended Protocol/Standard**
   The proposal for determining capital spending is composed of three main evaluations and three check "valves." The first evaluation is a series of questions regarding the effect on the system. In this evaluation, projects pass, fail or are given a deferred result. The second evaluation determines criticality and will put projects in one of four levels. The check valves determine whether funding is available, if the vendor is able to accomplish the project, and if other prerequisites are met, such as dependencies, system upgrades and frequencies are available. The last evaluation determines the timing of the project and placing it on the timeline. It should be noted that the RTOC will recommend to the MESB the level of criticality and the timing of the projects.

5. **Recommended Procedure**
   Evaluation #1 – Pass/Fail/Deferred
   In the first evaluation, a project must receive a "yes" answer to one of the following questions. If no "yes" answer is received, the project fails and would need to go to the RTOC for further consideration. The exception to this is a deferred project. For example, it is likely that at some time in the future a county subsystem will move to join the system. It is fairly certain that once they submit a plan it will be accepted. At this point, without any specifics, the county's subsystem would fail. However, the RTOC members know that this will need to be done, so they will give it a deferred rating. Deferred projects skip evaluation #2 and go straight to the deferred section of the timeline. Once the project meets one of the below questions, it will go through evaluation #2 and be repositioned on the timeline.

Questions

- Does the project add needed capacity to the system?
- Does the project add needed coverage to the system?
- Is the project a required system change (as required by the Legislature or vendor)?
- Does the project improve an identified system degradation?
- Does the project provide improved system reliability?
- Is the project an approved subsytem plan?
- Does the project provide needed interoperability?
- Has the project been requested by the RTOC?

Evaluation #2 – Criticality
At this stage, projects are placed by the RTOC into one of four criticality levels:

- **Critical** – addresses system limitation that have a direct and/or imminent impact on users' ability to effectively use the system.
- **Priority** – required by law or to maintain industry support or is needed to maintain system availability, reliability, and performance.
- **Needed System Improvement** – improves system availability, reliability, and performance.
- **System Enhancement** – provides desired feature sets or improves for operational efficiency or cost effectiveness.

Evalutation #3 – Dependencies
These check valves are yes/no questions. They do not prevent a project from going onto the timeline (see Evaluation #4 for further explanation).

Questions

- Is funding available?
- Does the vendor have the capability to provide the product or meet deadline?
- Are all prerequisites met (ex. Are frequencies available, are software upgrades required, resources available, other standards and other dependencies)?
- If applicable, does MnDOT approve of the impact on the backbone?

Evaluation #4 – Timeline
The timeline spreadsheet will have four blocks where projects will be located. The blocks correspond to the four criticality levels. The timeline will include a fifth block for the deferred projects.

Depending upon the results from the check valves, the projects will be color-coded: if a project passes all three, it will be green; if funding is not available for the project, it will be blue; if the vendor cannot support it, it will be orange; and if all prerequisites are not met, it will be red. All deferred projects will be black.

All projects that are not green will have footnotes attached to the project timeline spreadsheet identifying the dependencies and other pertinent information.

6. Management

The staff of the Metropolitan Emergency Services Board shall manage the administration of the plan. The RTOC will rank projects and instruct MESB staff to place projects on the timeline.

This policy shall be reviewed for possible revision or cancellation within two years of its adoption date.