

Write a brief document about funding secondary PSAPs should or should it not be proposed and if it should be proposed, how would it be accomplished.

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Secondary PSAPs add a lot of value for the citizens they serve and contain many resources that public safety could have at their disposal in the event of mass incidents. Conversely, secondary PSAPs can easily become overwhelmed in mass incidents because of their smaller staffing and lack of resources. So funding of secondary PSAPs needs to be handled in such a way as to maximize the resources they have while balancing the services needed by the community.

There is a trend of consolidating smaller PSAPs into one big regional PSAP. While resource wise this is very efficient there is a potential downside should the consolidated PSAP be lost or have to be abandoned. So the question becomes: Is there a potential solution that addresses both concerns?.

With today's technology, it is possible to rethink the concept of a regional PSAP and move beyond the four walls thinking. For the purpose of this discussion, let's use Catawba County with a primary PSAP and two secondary PSAPs as an example. Currently all calls come into the primary PSAP operated by the county and then are transferred to the secondary center if the call relates to police.

In a regional concept, the two smaller PSAPS would be merged into the larger primary. This would save resources and could probably be staffed with fewer people. But looking into the regional PSAP, one would probably find that the two smaller secondary PSAPs had just moved inside the four walls and that the telecommunicators were still dedicated to their departments.

Using technology, the same could be accomplished using a geo diverse model. The centers could have been left at their respective locations and still function as a merged center. Calls coming into the geo diverse PSAP could be answered by any telecommunicator at any console and the call could be dispatched by any telecommunicator at any console.

What does it take to make this work? The first is a desire to work together and provide the best services for your citizens. This may be the most difficult piece. As for the technical, the term "mirror image" needs to be redefined with standards. It is not necessary for everything to be identical in the geo diverse centers but it is necessary that everything work seamlessly together.

What are the major technical pieces?

- **Telephone:** The system should have the capability to route any call to any telecommunicator and that telecommunicator should be able to transfer that call to any to any other telecommunicator. It should function as one system as it would in a merged communication center.
- **CAD:** This is one area where standards need to be in place. The CAD software would not have to be the same in all locations but it would have to have seamless integration that moves information and updates in real time. Again, it should function as one system.
- **Mapping:** Should be seamless and each position, regardless of location, should have access to the same maps.
- **Radios:** Radios would be interoperable across the region and any telecommunicator could dispatch to any agency.
- **Training:** While not technical, it is crucial that all telecommunicators are trained to the same level of proficiency to be able to deal with calls.

While there are other areas that will need to be addressed, these are the major ones. The key to this and to the future safety of our citizens is standards that support seamless integration. A concept drawing illustrating the above points is attached.

At this point, the question of secondary PSAP funding, should it or should it not be proposed, has not been answered. As stated above, secondary PSAPs offer a lot of resources that can strengthen public safety but they must be part of the overall plan and not funded in isolation. If secondary PSAPs provide seamless integration with the primary PSAP, can provide all the services of the primary in real time, and are part of the overall public safety plan, then they should be considered for funding. If the secondary PSAP wishes to operate in isolation of the primary, then it should not be considered for funding.

Catawba County 911 Center Expansion and Backup

Geo Diverse Resource Locations

Catawba County 911 Center 6 positions

Hickory PD 4 positions

Newton PD 2 positions

**911 Caller
Anywhere
Catawba County**

