



E-Comm 9-1-1

2024 Transformation Progress Update
February 2025

INTRODUCTION

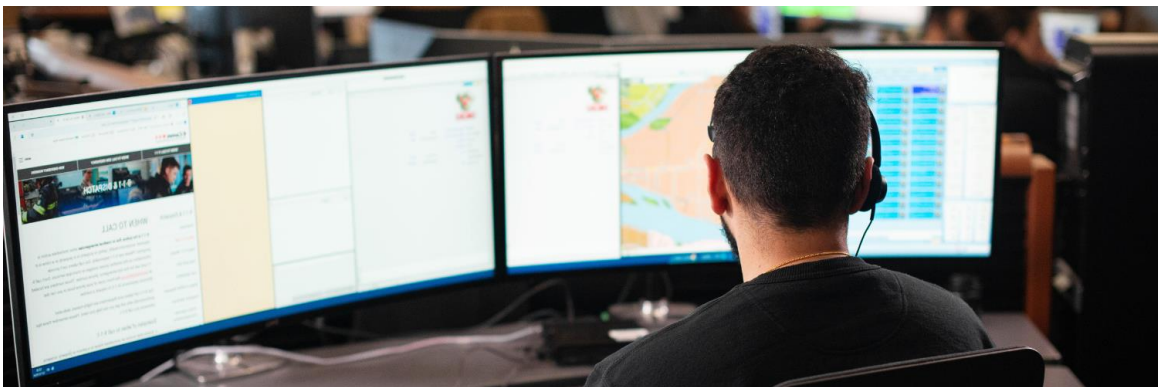
In November 2022, the E-Comm 9-1-1 Board of Directors approved a comprehensive transformation plan and budget, to modernize and put our operations on a solid foundation for the future. The five-year plan is intended to address long-standing challenges in our operations, and in every part of our organization, by providing – for the first time – dedicated funding, staff and capacity to implement improvements E-Comm needs to deliver consistent, high-quality emergency communications and related services.

This update is intended to inform our local government and agency partners, and the public we all serve, of our progress in 2024, and to outline some of the work to come in 2025, including the implementation of Next Generation 9-1-1.

2024 IN BRIEF – STRENGTHENING OUR OPERATIONS

In 2024, we saw positive results from the past two years of significant transformation investments across our organization. We achieved our best service levels in 8 years for 9-1-1, police/fire emergency and non-emergency call-taking. Some of the improvements introduced in 2024 included new contact centre technology, which offers more options for non-emergency callers in the Lower Mainland, and revamped training for operations staff. The investment in staffing and supports for our people led to greater retention among key work groups such as police call takers and dispatchers.

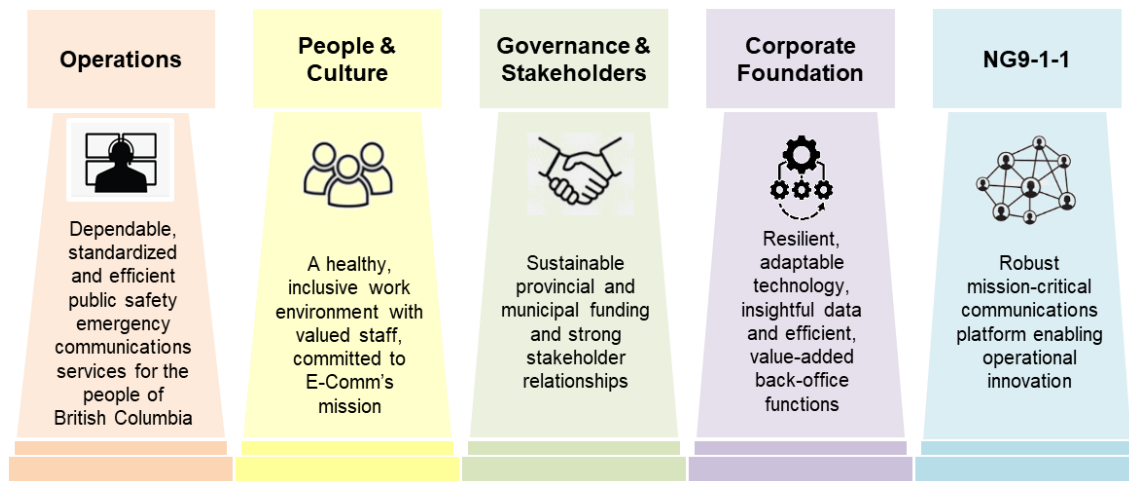
We have made significant strides in enhancing our business continuity and fortifying our cybersecurity in response to rising global cyber threats. We have also begun extensive foundational work to develop a new governance structure and financial model, to better serve our partners and the public. However, there is still more to accomplish in 2025 to effect those changes. There is also more to be done to modernize and streamline our operations and corporate services, particularly by capitalizing on the benefits of technology to drive efficiencies, automate processes and build a more technologically resilient organization. All of these serve our key objectives of demonstrating to our clients that we are controlling costs while maintaining high standards of service and security.



OVERALL OBJECTIVES OF TRANSFORMATION PLAN

1. achieve service level targets and improve public experience;
2. build a sustainable organization; and
3. stabilize financials and have predictable, consistent cost-to-serve.

The plan addresses five strategic pillars: Operations; People and Culture; Governance and Stakeholders; Corporate Foundation; and Next Generation 9-1-1. Objectives of each are summarized in the infographic. More information at: www.ecomm911.ca/transformation-plan.



BUILDING STRONG SERVICE LEVELS

- **Best performance across service levels in 8 years** – We achieved our best service levels in 8 years for 9-1-1, police/fire emergency call-taking, and non-emergency call-taking in 2024. These results are a testament to the impacts of our ongoing transformation investments, including improved staff retention and recruitment, as well as an overall reduction in call volumes compared to previous years.
- **Exceeding performance targets for 9-1-1 and police/fire emergency calls** – Our 9-1-1 service levels for 2024 held at 98% of calls answered in 5 seconds or less. The annual 9-1-1 call volume reached 2,049,856 – a 12% decrease from the previous year, when an Android operating system issue led to a spike in accidental calls. Service levels for police emergency call-taking surpassed our target of 88% of calls answered in 10 seconds in both the Lower Mainland (90%) and on Vancouver Island (91%) in 2024. Service levels for fire emergency call-taking reached 94%, exceeding our target of 90% of calls answered within 15 seconds. This is the highest service level result for fire in 4 years.

- Significant improvements for non-emergency service levels** - Lower Mainland non-emergency (NER) service levels experienced double-digit improvements for 2024 as compared to the past two years: climbing 17% higher than in 2023 and 36% higher than 2022 and ending the year on target with 80% of calls answered within three minutes. In the Lower Mainland, non-emergency call volumes were down 10.9% from 2023, and were also lower than in the two previous years. Much of this reduction is the result of some agencies transitioning to handle at least a proportion of their own NER calls.

LOWER MAINLAND 2024

| | Target | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|-----------------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| 9-1-1 | 95%/5s | 92% | 98% | 98% | 98% |
| Police Emergency | 88%/10s | 83% | 85% | 89% | 90% |
| Police Non-Emergency | 80%/180s | 55% | 44% | 63% | 80% |
| Fire Emergency | 90%/15s | 90% | 88% | 93% | 94% |

VANCOUVER ISLAND 2024

| | Target | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|-----------------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| 9-1-1 | 95%/5s | 92% | 98% | 98% | 98% |
| Police Emergency | 88%/10s | 90% | 88% | 88% | 91% |
| Police Non-Emergency | 80%/180s | 87% | 79% | 80% | 81% |

ONGOING OPERATIONS IMPROVEMENTS

2024 marked the first full year of some key changes to help strengthen our operations workforce. With our focus on retention and recruitment, we have seen improved staffing and service levels. Attrition rates for our dispatchers and police call takers in 2024 were lower than in 2023. Transformation investments also put E-Comm in an improved position to assume North Vancouver RCMP's non-emergency call taking service in 2024. We have since welcomed West Vancouver Police back as a non-emergency partner as well.

- **Fewer abandoned calls & faster answer times for non-emergency** – Transformation improvements such as our dedicated non-emergency team and the launch of Genesys contact centre technology in May 2024 led to faster average answering times of 2 minutes, down from 4 minutes in 2023. Genesys provides non-emergency callers in the Lower Mainland with additional options including call back requests and wait time estimates, leading to an improved public experience. These improvements have had a positive impact on the number of abandoned calls to non-emergency, which dropped in the Lower Mainland to 15% in 2024, a 50% reduction from 2023.
- **Strengthening our dispatch workforce** – We have made progress on shoring up new supports and offering improved training to help facilitate more positions in dispatch – a critical and high-demand staffing area which requires a unique skillset. In 2024, new training was introduced which combines e-learning with in-class instruction, complemented by peer supported on-the-job coaching. We have also created police agency-specific training for new dispatchers, to ensure they are as well-prepared as possible for the individual needs and policies of our partners. Employee retention in this highly specialized role improved in 2024, with only a 3% attrition rate compared to 7% the previous year.
- **New training for police call takers** – New police call takers also benefitted from redesigned training in 2024. We developed interactive e-learning modules intended to create a more modern, research-based learning experience that better reflects the real-world experience of the job. In November, our staff presented on our revamped approach to training for call takers and dispatchers at the national Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) conference in Toronto, Ontario.
- **Data-driven solution to track staffing needs** – Digital dashboards created by our Data & Analytics team can now monitor service levels and call volumes in near real time. This allows us to quickly react to staffing pressure points and redistribute resources accordingly between our two emergency communications centres in the Lower Mainland and on Vancouver Island. The Data & Analytics team is also helping to track workforce dynamics, with the goal of improving operational efficiency.

ADVANCEMENTS IN PEOPLE & CULTURE

- **Creating a strong support network** – E-Comm's Critical Incident Peer Support team grew significantly in 2024, with over sixty additional employees taking part in training with a psychologist specializing in first responder mental health and trauma. These Peer Support members volunteer to provide on-site support for colleagues experiencing distress following a critical incident, or who require additional wellness resources.
- **Specialized training to promote resilience** - E-Comm employees also took part in Resilient Minds training led by peer instructors throughout 2024. The program was created by a veteran Vancouver firefighter in partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association and was adapted specifically for our organization to better understand the effects of stress, employ trauma-informed approaches, and communicate effectively and compassionately with coworkers and the public.
- **Commitment to Truth & Reconciliation** - E-Comm is working to incorporate the principles of Truth and Reconciliation into our organization's culture and services through a multi-faceted approach. In 2024, we launched a new recruitment partnership with ACCESS Futures, a community-led Indigenous organization providing training and employment services. E-Comm also adopted a customized territorial acknowledgement and had the honour of being presented with a work of art by Ojibwe artist Animikii Ikwe (Thunderbird Woman) Jamie-Lynn Robert, which is featured on the cover of our Collective Agreement. The art project involved significant collaboration with CUPE Local 8911 and symbolizes our shared commitment to help protect the public and first responders. Our ongoing Truth and Reconciliation journey is a key part of our commitment to create a more inclusive, equitable, and accessible work environment.
- **Listening to our team** – Our 2024 Employee Engagement Survey received an overall response rate of 82%, which was five percent higher than the previous year. We are still analyzing the full results; however, the feedback will help inform changes across our organization to continue to improve our employee experience.



GOVERNANCE & STAKEHOLDERS

A review of E-Comm's governance, commissioned by our Board of Directors and conducted by Deloitte, was [publicly released](#) in June 2024. Deloitte's report provided 10 recommendations to improve our governance and financial model, based on input from 80 representatives of our shareholder and service-user organizations.

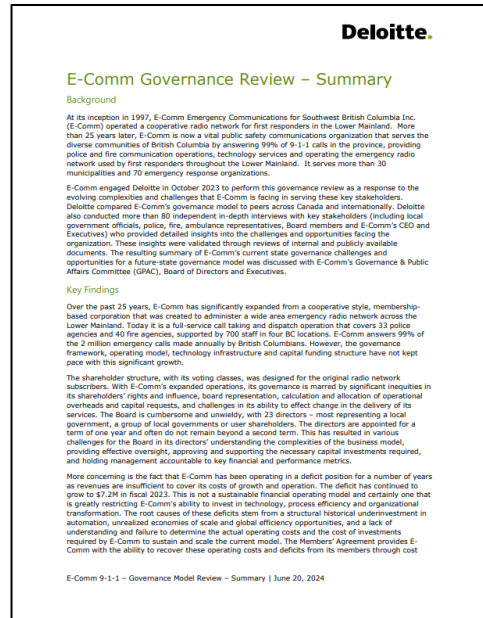
Since then, we have worked to fine-tune the future state governance model, with input from shareholders, as well as to develop an improved financial model with the goal of creating a more equitable and transparent pricing and cost-allocation model for our agency partners. Our efforts over the past year have kickstarted the foundational work needed to build a new fee structure to ensure a predictable cost-to-serve going forward.

As of January 2025, this work has been paused while we await the outcome of an independent provincial review, detailed in the following section. We remain ready to resume this important work as appropriate once the review is complete.

PROVINCIAL REVIEW

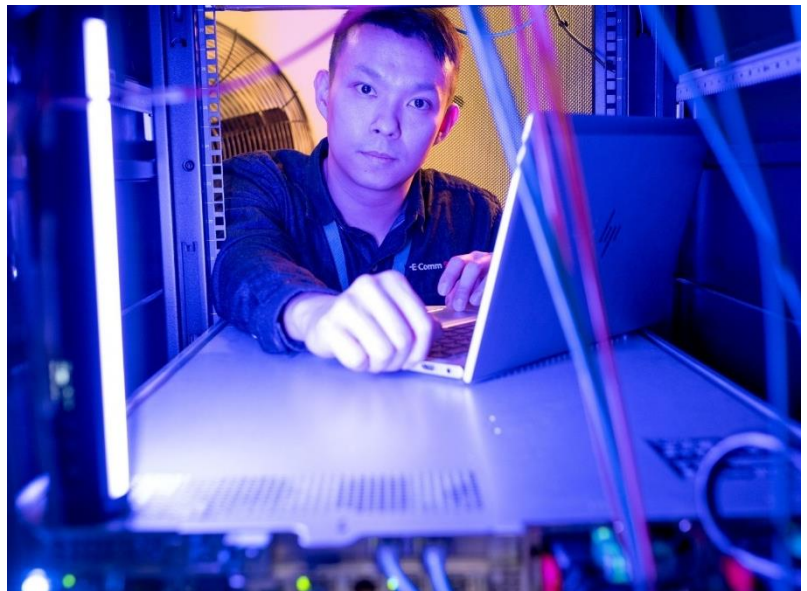
On December 5, 2024, the Province announced its own independent review of E-Comm's governance, operations and finances, and the broader structure of 9-1-1 and emergency communication services in B.C. to be completed in 2025. E-Comm has long supported calls by the Union of BC Municipalities, local governments, police chiefs and others for the province to take a larger role in the governance and funding of 9-1-1 services in B.C., and we welcome this review. We will participate fully in the process and hope the findings will enable broader improvements to 9-1-1 standards, funding and governance moving forward.

In light of the provincial review, we are pausing further external shareholder engagement activities related to our Governance project and financial model redesign for now. However, our Finance team will continue to work internally on developing a new model to guide E-Comm's multi-year financial plan – this is important work that our shareholders and partners have asked for and we view as essential to continue regardless of the outcome of the provincial review.



CORPORATE FOUNDATION

- **Greater insight & transparency through analytics** – In November 2024, we launched our first fully cloud-based data and analytics platform, with the support of our partner agencies. This new platform has led to the creation of self-serve dashboards for our police partners, which allows them to track and view our performance and service level specifics for their agency, including both emergency and non-emergency calls. In addition to presenting our performance on their behalf, the dashboards allow police agencies to analyse their own public demand trends for their services using our call statistics data. Similar dashboards are also being developed for our fire agency partners.
- **Corporate optimization for improved efficiency** – A major project launched in March 2024 to identify opportunities to revitalize and streamline outdated work processes throughout our organization for greater efficiency and cost savings. The project team has created a comprehensive project outline with a long-term vision for improvements. Some of those updates are already underway, including moving from manual to automated systems for tasks such as expense management, and data integration to better support the needs of our Finance and People & Culture teams.
- **Technology projects to enhance resiliency** – Our Technology team is working on multiple strategies centered around building up our cyber defenses and resiliency. In 2024, the team completed a robust back-up system to better insulate our core services from disruption. They have also been putting our network through rigorous testing to proactively address vulnerabilities and have implemented new tools to better detect potential threats. As part of another new initiative in 2024, employees from across the organization took part in a new mandatory annual cybersecurity course, to provide the tools and awareness necessary to help E-Comm maintain a secure work environment.



NEXT GENERATION 9-1-1

E-Comm has made significant progress towards the federally-mandated implementation of Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) – a digital network which will allow for enhanced information sharing through 9-1-1 in the future, including text and video.

Our project team has completed several essential steps, such as the core infrastructure build, and has been conducting thorough testing of system environments. In March 2023, the Province provided funding of \$90 million to help offset initial implementation and start-up costs, which resulted in a significant cost savings for local governments.

Within this one-time funding envelope, we are preparing to begin transitioning partner sites to the NG9-1-1 network by the end of 2025.

E-Comm's work towards implementing NG9-1-1 is truly province-wide in scope. Not only will E-Comm transition its 25 regional district partners, but we will also be delivering call handling solutions for BC Emergency Health Services, the BC RCMP, and the Saanich Fire Department (connected to our Vancouver Island-based communications centre operations). It is probable that this combination means E-Comm's transition is likely not only the most complex in Canada, but across North America.

LOOKING AHEAD – 2025 AND BEYOND

E-Comm has made significant progress in 2024 and thanks to the investment into the transformation plan, and through the hard work and dedication of our staff, we have strengthened our operations with quantifiable service level results. With some significant events on the horizon for E-Comm, including the impending shift to NG9-1-1, we recognize that there is still much work ahead.

Several challenges remain, including implementing solutions for outdated governance and financial models, lack of provincewide standards governing 9-1-1 and emergency communications, the need for reasonable and predictable costs for local governments and taxpayers, aging infrastructure and technology, and an increasingly threatening cyber security landscape.

While our 2024 service level achievements are welcomed by the agencies we serve, we recognize they remain concerned about cost increases, which have been driven by historic underfunding. We acknowledge that recent increases are not sustainable and will be engaging in projects to mitigate cost growth for our partners through improved efficiencies, while also offering greater transparency into our fee structure with the development of a new model.

In 2025 we will focus on maintaining our strengthened operations and service levels, leveraging technology, building resiliency, and ensuring more sustainable and predictable costs for our partners.

Some examples of projects we will be advancing in 2025 include:

- Implementation and “go-live” of Next Generation 9-1-1.
- A new digital strategy for operations, which will provide a roadmap on how to best leverage technology to support our workforce as they serve the public and first responders.
- Preparing for FIFA 2026 in Vancouver alongside our public safety partners, as part of the Vancouver Host City Integrated Safety & Security Unit.
- Building more resiliency into our information management systems to protect critical infrastructure and the services we provide to the public and our partners, including considering a wider cloud-based technology strategy and establishing comprehensive business continuity and disaster recovery processes.
- Updating internal processes to improve efficiencies and workload in our Finance & People & Culture departments, including moving from manual to automated systems for data extraction related to workforce dynamics.
- A new leadership program for our organization, which will present opportunities for employees interested in leadership roles, while also promoting skill development for existing leaders.
- Progress on the development of a new, more transparent financial model and further sustainability improvements (pending the outcome of the provincial review).
- Planning and budgeting regarding a much-needed third emergency communications centre site for E-Comm, which will be critical for both physical capacity and redundancy needs to accommodate the growth of our team and services (our current back-up location will not be available beyond 2028, due to lease terms).

Finally, E-Comm is eager to participate in the provincial independent review in 2025. Our mission is to deliver excellence in emergency communications, and any step to strengthen our ability to do so and ensure a sustainable and effective model is most welcome.

We are grateful to our exceptional staff, and our local government and agency partners, for helping to enable our progress to date. And we look forward to keeping you updated on our progress in 2025.

For more information on any of these initiatives, please contact the E-Comm Communications & Public Affairs team at: communications@ecomm911.ca.