


*City of Alexandria, Virginia***MEMORANDUM**

DATE: May 5, 2010  
TO: The Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council  
FROM: James K. Hartmann, City Manager   
SUBJECT: Information Technology (IT) Assessment

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A City Council work session to discuss the findings and recommendations of the Plante & Moran study of our information technology (IT) operations has been scheduled before Council's May 11 legislative meeting. Attached for your review is the complete report. As you recall, the City engaged Plante & Moran, a Michigan based IT consulting firm, to provide a comprehensive review and assessment of how IT is functionally aligned and governed within the City. The report focuses on how the various IT related organizations within the City are structured and the degree to which centralization and/or decentralization of our IT operations impacts the efficiency, effectiveness, customer responsiveness, and overall quality of our IT program.

Significant findings from the report include:

- The City is a recognized leader among local governments for its IT achievements and is frequently used as a benchmark by peer organizations.
- Numerous forward thinking IT investments accomplished over many years have resulted in a strong, reliable infrastructure that produces high end-user satisfaction.
- The City's Information Technology Steering Committee (ITSC) and subcommittee framework is in line with best practices for IT governance and investment planning oversight.
- The City's IT operations are highly decentralized, particularly with respect to organization and investment.
  - The majority of resources committed to IT are committed in direct support of individual departments rather than the City's central Information Technology Services Department.
  - This City's decentralized model of IT organization has both advantages and disadvantages; key business operations are well supported but service and support across the whole of the IT operational system is uneven and may be more costly than necessary.

Significant recommendations include:

- Enhance IT governance by creating a more strategically focused ITSC with Department Heads responsible for approving IT strategy and setting priorities.

- Require the ITSC to increase its focus on strategic synchronization of IT assets and investments and return on investment (ROI) calculations for future IT investment.
- Upgrade the ITS Director position and create a Chief Information Officer (CIO) position. The CIO would be the standing chair of the ITSC and responsible for all IT policy, procedures and major IT projects for the City.
- Improve the City's capacity to manage enterprise applications and projects by expanding the ITS Project Management Office and establishing a Project Portfolio Management system.
- Consolidate Help Desk functions, GIS and web development within the ITS department to create economies of scale and streamline service request, development and delivery.

In addition to scheduling a work session of Council to discuss the report, I have asked members of the ITSC, the City Manager's Advisory Group and other key stakeholders to provide me with their comments. The City Manager's Advisory Group is scheduled to review the report and provide comments this evening.

STAFF: Tom Gates, Assistant City Manager  
Tom Trowbridge, Director, Information Technology Services