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Office of Emergency Services: Next Generation 911 System

PRESENTED TO:

Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 6 on Public
Safety
Hon. James C. Ramos, Chair



LEGISLATIVE ANALYST'S OFFICE

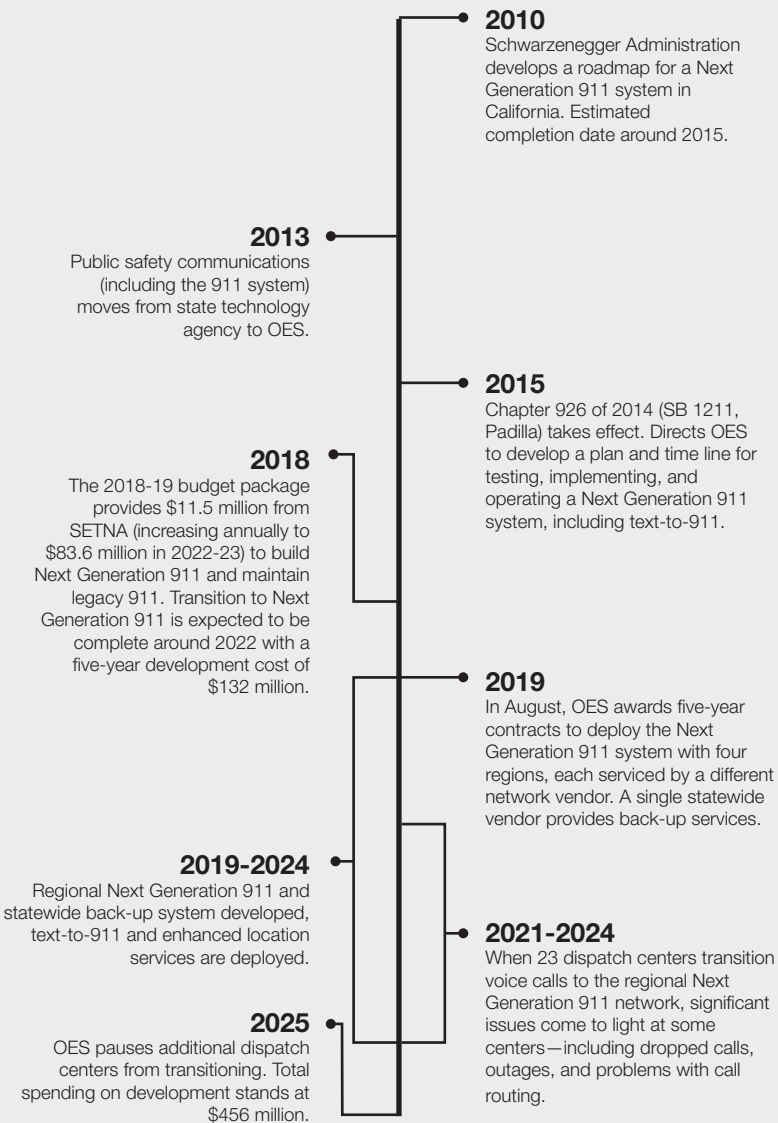
What Is Next Generation 911?

- **Uses Internet Protocol (IP)-Based Technology**
 - Allows 911 data to be sent from one computer to another over the Internet.
- **Has Several Advantages Over Legacy 911**
 - Multimedia emergency 911 communications (voice, video, photos, and text).
 - Improved location data.
 - Automatically re-routes 911 calls to other dispatch centers, which can help with high call volumes during natural disasters, large emergencies, or major events.
- **Consists of Four Major Components**
 - **Network**—A Next Generation 911 network delivers emergency communications over an IP-based emergency services network. These networks are specifically designated for use by public safety agencies.
 - **Core Services**—Next Generation 911 core services include the software and databases needed to route emergency communications on the network.
 - **Geographic Information Systems**—These systems provide location data used to direct emergency communications to appropriate dispatch centers and help first responders locate those in need of assistance.
 - **Call Handling Equipment**—This equipment enables a dispatch center to receive, process, and dispatch IP-based emergency communications.



Project and Cost History: 2010 to 2025

Next Generation 911: Time Line of Major Milestones



OES = Office of Emergency Services and SETNA = State Emergency Telephone Number Account.

LAO



Challenges and a New Direction

■ OES Pauses Project and Identifies Key Difficulties With Regional Approach

- Dispatch centers did not have a clear support process when it was necessary to report a trouble ticket.
- Complexities of the network and interdependencies between the service providers created failure points.
- The regional approach created a situation where both the technical and operational design were significantly adjusted from industry-standard practices, introducing fragility and risk.
- Call handling procedures in the hybrid legacy/Next Generation 911 configuration generated additional work for some dispatch center staff.

■ OES Begins Moving Rapidly Towards Major Changes to Next Generation 911 System

- In November 2025, OES announces its intention to switch from the regional approach (with four vendors and a statewide backup) to a statewide approach (one primary network and a backup).
- In February 2026, OES releases a three-phase implementation plan for this new approach:
 - Execute an interim contract in the coming weeks and move dispatch centers currently using regional networks for voice calls to the current statewide back-up provider. Focus on deployment in Los Angeles (ahead of Olympics) and on 20 or so other dispatch centers in most urgent need. Execute a long-term statewide contract by fall 2026.
 - Plan for and migrate all state dispatch centers to the new long-term statewide system in late 2026.
 - Decommission legacy 911 by end of 2030.



LAO Findings

- Project is overdue and budget needs are unclear. OES has not provided the Legislature with a cost estimate.
- Changes proposed by OES may be entirely appropriate, but changes always come with trade-offs.
- Changes of this magnitude to a critical public safety system are best accomplished under close oversight, which has been lacking.
- Key questions have not been answered or have not been sufficiently answered, including:
 - What, exactly, is the nature and scope of the problems with the regional system?
 - Will the transition to a statewide approach solve them?
 - What other options were considered?
 - How do these options compare?
 - How do these options comply with state privacy and security regulations and laws?
 - Is there sufficient oversight—both of this specific project, and of the state’s overall 911 system going forward?
- 911 will continue to evolve even after the legacy 911 system has been decommissioned and the state’s dispatch centers are all using Next Generation 911.



LAO Recommendations

- Pause the transition to the statewide approach until OES provides information answering key questions by the May Revision.
 - In particular, direct OES to provide an analysis of options and trade-offs.
- If OES cannot do so, prohibit OES from implementing the statewide approach until an independent, technical, third-party evaluation is completed.
- Require quarterly fiscal reports and monthly progress reports to the Legislature.
- Consider governance options and oversight for the long term.

