



## DC PUBLIC SAFETY RADIO NETWORK FACT SHEET

### **The problem with public safety radio communications in the District – coverage was limited**

There were many areas in the District where public safety radios did not function clearly and reliably. Public safety first responders used personal cellular phones while on emergency calls to relay vital information. This presented a real danger both to the safety of first responders in the field and to the public as a whole. This problem was similar to the experience of police and firefighters in the World Trade Center, with disastrous results.

### **The solution – upgrade the system**

The District needed to upgrade the current wireless infrastructure to provide reliability and interoperability. This required obtaining leases at 10 sites, the installation of broadcast structures at 6 new sites, improved equipment at all sites, and the purchase of 63 Vehicular Repeater Systems to supplement the program.

### **Expanded coverage for the District – and the highest standards**

This wireless voice upgrade corrects the serious deficiencies in the previous system. By addressing these shortfalls, the District of Columbia now has one of the best public safety radio system coverages in the nation, expanding coverage across the city and, by next year, into the Metro tunnels.

According to Motorola, the system vendor and national leader in the industry, the coverage requirements specified by the District were among the most stringent specifications Motorola has designed and implemented to date.

### **Police, Fire and EMS can talk to each other – interoperability**

The wireless upgrade provides communications between Police and Fire/EMS. The District's integration of the city's 800 MHz and 460 MHz radio systems will provide a seamless communications network between Police and Fire/EMS and will help prevent incidents where public safety officers are placed in harm's way because of an inability to communicate. In addition, this system allows District public safety personnel to communicate with their counterparts in neighboring jurisdictions in the event of a significant public safety emergency.

### **Federal support funds the project**

This project qualified for federal emergency preparedness funding, because of the District's significant new regional and national responsibilities. Congress appropriated a total of \$46.5 million dollars for emergency information technology (IT) initiatives for the District. Improving the wireless network was the highest priority, and the bulk of these funds – just under \$36.6 million – were allocated to this project.

### **The wireless upgrade is on time and on budget**

With careful planning and relying on District personnel for substantial portions of the project work, the wireless upgrade came in on time and budget. A careful seven-month design, technical planning, requirements definition, and technical analysis phase prior to project implementation ensured we solved the right radio problems, in the right way, at the right price.

### **Planning for the future – wireless broadband data communications capability**

The new system design is capable of handling contiguous, wide-band (700-800 MHz) data communications when the 700 MHz band is released for public safety use. These broadband data applications will provide greater resources to first responders than ever before.