

# Capitola City Council

## Agenda Report

**Meeting:** December 11, 2025

**From:** Police Department

**Subject:** Regional Interoperable Next Generation Radio System



**Recommended Action:** Approve the City of Capitola's participation in the Regional Interoperable Next Generation (RING) Radio System by (1) authorizing the City Manager to execute the Master Service and Governance Agreement with the County of Santa Cruz and partner agencies and (2) designating the City Manager to serve as the City's voting member on the RING Executive Committee.

**Background:** Public safety and emergency response in Santa Cruz County rely heavily on two-way radio communication among police, fire, emergency medical, and public works personnel. The existing radio systems used in Capitola, the County, other cities, and the University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC) were designed and built decades ago. These legacy systems are now fragmented, technically obsolete, and increasingly unreliable. They lack interoperability between agencies, are non-compliant with the California Department of Justice (DOJ) encryption standards for law enforcement and fail to provide consistent coverage across the both City's and region's diverse topography.

To address these issues, the County of Santa Cruz has led the development of the Regional Interoperable Next Generation (RING) Radio System, a countywide, unified radio communications network built on the nationally recognized Project 25 (P25) digital standard. The new RING system will replace existing independent systems with a single, secure platform supporting all public safety and municipal operations across the County, all cities, and UCSC.

The RING system represents a transformational investment in public safety and regional resilience. By joining now, Capitola secures its position as a core partner in a unified, modern communications system that will serve all residents and public service departments for decades.

**Discussion:** Currently, each jurisdiction operates separate and ageing systems with limited compatibility. During critical incidents—such as wildfires, floods, or law-enforcement operations – these gaps in communication hinder coordination and pose direct risks to public safety personnel and residents. The RING system eliminates these barriers by providing a shared platform for all agencies, enabling seamless, encrypted communication across jurisdictions, departments, and disciplines.

RING is designed to be a mission-critical, P25-compliant digital system that supports both voice and data transmission. It will provide enhanced interoperability among all police, fire, and emergency service agencies, expanded coverage countywide, improved reliability and redundancy, encryption compliance with California DOJ standards, and shared governance with transparent cost allocation.

The County awarded the system implementation contract to E.F. Johnson Company (JVCKenwood) in early November 2025 following a competitive RFP process. The project budget totals approximately \$28.3 million, covering infrastructure, subscriber equipment, warranties, and long-term support.

The governance framework is established through the Master Service and Governance Agreement (MSGAG). Under the MSGAG:

- The County of Santa Cruz will serve as the fiscal agent and operational lead, managing contracts, system maintenance, and financial administration.

- Member agencies retain ownership of existing infrastructure while agreeing to shared standards and participation in joint governance.
- The Executive Committee, composed of the City Managers and the County Administrative Officer, oversees policy, budget approval, and capital planning.
- Advisory bodies, including a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and a Regional Subscriber Group (RSG), ensure operational and technical collaboration.

Participation in RING provides substantial benefits to the City, including:

- Enhanced public safety and reliability during emergencies.
- Cost efficiency through shared infrastructure and maintenance.
- Regulatory compliance with DOJ encryption and FCC standards.
- Equal representation in governance and fiscal decisions.
- A future-ready communications platform supporting decades of service.

Without participation, the City would continue to bear escalating costs to maintain obsolete systems and remain isolated from countywide interoperability improvements.

Fiscal Impact: The City's total financial participation will consist of annual operational and capital fees based on the number of radio units assigned to the City. Staff estimates the City has 47 active radio units, or roughly 2% of the current system. Five-year cost projections are shown below. Attachment 3 has fiscal cost projections through 2039. The Planned FY 2027 Budget includes \$50,000 for the RING project.

	<b>FY 2027</b>	<b>FY 2028</b>	<b>FY 2029</b>	<b>FY 2030</b>	<b>FY 2031</b>
Projected costs	\$ 48,256	\$ 49,640	\$ 90,078	\$ 113,043	\$ 115,293

The RING Member agencies have all agreed to jointly pursue available state and federal grants to offset local costs where possible. If successful, those grants would reduce the City's projected costs.

Attachments:

1. 2025 RING System Master Service Governance Agreement
2. RING Financial Summary

Report Prepared By: Sarah Ryan, Chief of Police

Reviewed By: Julia Gautho, City Clerk

Approved By: Jamie Goldstein, City Manager