

FirstNet Program Roadmap Executive Summary

The First Responder Network Authority (“FirstNet”) was created to empower America's first responders with state of the art communications tools. FirstNet’s mission is to ensure that a nationwide, interoperable, wireless broadband network is built for the public safety community.

With this goal in mind, we need to build, either ourselves or with partners, a network that covers most of the geography of 50 states, 5 territories, the District of Columbia, and 566 tribal nations. As we do, we will identify specific milestones for rural America in our deployment strategy.

FirstNet’s deployment strategy will likely be accomplished through a combination of terrestrial systems and the use of mobile and satellite systems. We plan to have significant coverage across the U.S. through the use of terrestrial topologies, similar to what wireless carriers have today (approximately 60 percent of geography). In addition, for the remaining geographies, we plan to use specific solutions for rural deployment, including partnering with rural infrastructure providers, deployables, mobile communications solutions, and satellite systems.

The key differentiators that FirstNet will bring to the public safety community will be a dedicated, nationally interoperable broadband network, with the capabilities of guaranteed quality of service, priority usage, and preemption. In addition, the FirstNet network will be “hardened” from the physical layer, user access, and cyber security perspectives, which will provide more resiliency. The network operating standards will also provide local control to public safety agencies, allowing for more control over provisioning, device features, and reporting.

We will create this public safety network within the financial parameters outlined in the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012, and ensure its sustainability through federal funding from spectrum auctions (up to \$7 billion), and funding from user fees and agreements with third-parties that will leverage the value of secondary use of our excess network capacity.

We have studied and analyzed various approaches to deploying the network, including a stand-alone build and public-private arrangements. We have made assumptions regarding the major components of revenue, operating expense, and capital expense. We have confidence in the cost assumptions based on our market research with vendors and the collective industry experience and knowledge of FirstNet staff. The more challenging assumptions are revenue based. Perhaps the most important assumption in our models to date is the value of secondary use of our excess network capacity through covered leasing agreements. Focusing on and being successful in public-private arrangements to realize this value will be an important aspect in executing a sustainable business model. We have confidence that we can validate most of our assumptions through executing our program roadmap before we finalize state plans. If we can realize the assumptions that we have within our financial models, we believe that we will have a business plan that offers important value to public safety and is sustainable.

To arrive at a definitive business plan and complete state-based plans, we have several significant tasks on our roadmap that must be accomplished:

- Staff and resource the organization;
- Complete an open, transparent, and competitive process for comprehensive network proposals based upon FirstNet LTE performance requirements, operating standards, and certified devices;

- Complete an open, transparent, and competitive process for network equipment and services proposals based on detailed technical requirements, resulting in multiple awards that could supplement or substitute for all or part of a comprehensive network proposal;
- In conjunction with each of the comprehensive network and network equipment and services processes, obtain proposals for covered leasing agreements that will provide value for our excess network capacity;
- Complete testing and validation of critical features and functionality of the network;
- Conduct state outreach and complete state consultation; and
- Review aggregated information to determine pricing for approval by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).

In addition to the major focus areas outlined above, we also believe that we should set out certain of our legislative interpretations and proposed rules for public comment. This is particularly true in areas that may be unclear under the legislation and/or where it would be helpful to give notice to public and private parties that will participate in the FirstNet program roadmap.

We will share our proactive strategy with our key constituents – public safety across all levels of government. We will also share our strategy with Congress, the Administration, and the media. We feel that this approach is critical as we progress through our program roadmap.

As we complete the above referenced tasks along the roadmap – particularly the proposal processes – the ultimate FirstNet network solution and business plan will narrow and become clearer. If our efforts fail to secure public-private arrangements that provide value to us at the level we assume, we may have to consider a different approach, one for which we have been studying options.

Reaching a defined and sustainable business plan requires talented resources across the organization, as well as Board oversight and guidance. We want to make rapid progress for public safety, while balancing the need for robust design and cost-effectiveness. At this time, we believe the following milestones, over approximately the next year, should serve as appropriate checkpoints to ensure that we are on track within our roadmap to reach our goals:

- Initiate public notice and comment on certain program procedures, policies, and statutory interpretations;
- Release draft request for comprehensive network proposals for offeror comments;
- Release draft requests for certain network equipment and services proposals for offeror comments; and
- Begin formal State consultations.

As we travel along our program roadmap, we may determine that some of our assumptions were flawed, and change course accordingly. We may change the order of, or the actual roadmap milestones themselves as a result. Nevertheless, we believe we have charted a course to prove out a successful FirstNet for public safety. We will be providing substantially more detail about each roadmap item in the coming months.