



# PUBLIC NOTICE

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## PUBLIC SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY BUREAU INVITES COMMENTS ON REGION 51 (TEXAS-HOUSTON) 700 MHZ REGIONAL PLAN

PS Docket No. 06-229 and WT Docket No. 02-378

Comments Due: July 24, 2008

Reply Comments Due: August 4, 2008

*Introduction.* On February 29, 2008, the Region 51 (Texas-Houston)<sup>1</sup> 700 MHz Regional Planning Committee (Region 51) submitted a proposed 700 MHz Public Safety Plan (Plan) for General Use<sup>2</sup> spectrum in the 769-775/799-805 MHz band.<sup>3</sup>

*Background.* In 1998, the Federal Communications Commission (Commission) established a structure to allow regional planning committees (RPCs) optimal flexibility to meet state and local needs, encourage innovative use of the spectrum, and accommodate new and as yet unanticipated developments in technology and equipment.<sup>4</sup> There are fifty-five RPCs, and each committee is required to submit its plan for the General Use spectrum.<sup>5</sup> The Commission's role in relation to the RPCs is limited to (1) defining the regional boundaries; (2) requiring fair and open procedures, *i.e.*, requiring notice, opportunity for comment, and reasonable consideration; (3) specifying the elements that all regional plans must

<sup>1</sup> The Region 51 (Texas-Houston) 700 MHz regional planning area includes twenty-eight counties: Angelina, Brazoria, Austin, Colorado, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Hardin, Harris, Houston, Jasper, Jefferson, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Nacogdoches, Newton, Orange, Polk, San Augustine, San Jacinto, Sabine, Shelby, Trinity, Tyler, Walker, Waller, Wharton and Matagorda.

<sup>2</sup> The General Use spectrum is administered by regional planning committees (RPCs) and is licensed for public safety services on a site-by-site basis in accordance with the relevant Commission-approved regional plan and frequency coordination.

<sup>3</sup> See Region 51 700 MHz Regional Planning Committee Plan, WT Docket No. 02-378 (filed Feb. 29, 2008) (Plan); see also, Letter from Doug Frankhouser, Chairman, Region 51, to Federal Communications Commission, WT Docket No. 02-378 (filed May 5, 2008) (explaining the technical difficulties regarding the submission of the original plan).

<sup>4</sup> See Development of Operational, Technical and Spectrum Requirements for Meeting Federal, State and Local Public Safety Agency Communication Requirements Through the Year 2010, WT Docket No. 96-86, *First Report and Order and Third Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, 14 FCC Rcd 152 (1998) (*First Report and Order*); *Second Memorandum Opinion and Order*, 15 FCC Rcd 16844 (2000). See also 47 C.F.R. § 90.527.

<sup>5</sup> See 47 C.F.R. § 90.527. Each RPC must incorporate certain common elements into its 700 MHz plan. A list of 700 MHz RPCs and region activities is available at <http://www.fcc.gov/pshs/public-safety-spectrum/700-MHz/>.

include; and (4) reviewing and accepting proposed plans (or amendments to approved plans) or rejecting them with an explanation.<sup>6</sup>

The Commission expects RPCs to ensure that their committees are representative of all public safety entities in their regions by providing reasonable notice of all meetings and deliberations. Further, regional plans must include an explanation of how all eligible entities within the region were given such notice.<sup>7</sup> For the initial meeting, called by the convenor to form the RPC and hold elections, the Commission requires at least sixty days notice.<sup>8</sup> In developing their regional plans, RPCs must ensure that their proposed plans comply with the rules and policies governing the 700 MHz public safety regional planning process.<sup>9</sup> We also encourage the RPCs to consider utilizing the guidelines developed by the Public Safety National Coordination Committee (NCC).<sup>10</sup> RPCs may approach the assignment of the spectrum differently, *e.g.*, by making specific assignments to eligible public safety entities, or by establishing an allotment pool approach based on political boundaries such as counties.

On July 31, 2007, the Commission adopted a *Second Report and Order* revising the rules governing wireless licenses in the 700 MHz band.<sup>11</sup> The Commission adopted a plan for the 700 MHz band to establish a nationwide, interoperable public safety broadband communications network for the benefit of state and local public safety users. The Commission designated the lower half of the 700 MHz public safety band for broadband communications (763-768/793-798 MHz) and consolidated existing narrowband allocations in the upper half of the public safety 700 MHz band (769-775/799-805 MHz).

*Region 51 700 MHz Plan.* The Region 51 Plan pre-allocates the consolidated narrowband General Use spectrum by county.<sup>12</sup> The Plan was coordinated with all four adjacent regions to Region 51: Region 18 (Louisiana), Region 40 (Texas-Austin), Region 49 (Texas-Central Austin area) and Region 53 (Texas-San Antonio).<sup>13</sup> We have reviewed the Region 51 Plan and find it to be compliant with the applicable Commission rules and policies, and tentatively accept the Plan.

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<sup>6</sup> *First Report and Order*, 14 FCC Rcd at 195 ¶ 87.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* at 193-94 ¶ 84. RPCs must promptly adopt operating procedures that “ensure that all entities will be given reasonable notice of all committee meetings and deliberations.” *Id.* at 195 ¶ 86.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* at 195 ¶ 86 & n.220.

<sup>9</sup> 47 C.F.R. § 90.527; *see also First Report and Order*, 14 FCC Rcd at 190-96 ¶¶ 77-89.

<sup>10</sup> The NCC was a federal advisory committee established by the Commission in 1999 to address and advise the Commission on operational and technical parameters for use of the 700 MHz public safety band. In addition, the NCC was tasked with providing voluntary assistance in the development of coordinated regional plans, and developed a *Regional Planning Guidebook*. Following the sunset of the NCC’s charter on July 25, 2003, the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC) agreed to continue to provide assistance to regional planners. A copy of the 700 MHz Regional Planning Guidebook is available at the NPSTC website <http://www.npstc.org/documents.html>.

<sup>11</sup> *Implementing a Nationwide, Broadband, Interoperable Public Safety Network in the 700 MHz Band; Development of Operational, Technical and Spectrum Requirements for Meeting Federal, State and Local Public Safety Communications Requirements Through the Year 2010*, PS Docket No. 06-229, WT Docket No. 96-86, *Second Report and Order*, 22 FCC Rcd 15289 (2007) (*Second Report and Order*).

<sup>12</sup> *See Plan Section 16.1.6 – Channel Assignments for Region 51 at 214-237.*

<sup>13</sup> *See Plan Section 18 – Adjacent Regions Concurrences at 258-265; see also, Plan Section 17 – Inter-Regional Dispute Resolution Agreements (signed by all adjacent regions).*

Prior to taking further action on the Plan, by this Public Notice, we solicit comments on the Plan. Pursuant to Sections 1.415 and 1.419 of the Commission's rules, 47 C.F.R. §§ 1.415, 1.419, interested parties may file comments on the Region 51 700 MHz Plan on or before **July 24, 2008**, and reply comments on or before **August 4, 2008**. All comments and reply comments should reference the subject Revised Plan and **PS Docket No. 06-229** and **WT Docket No. 02-378**. Comments and reply comments may be filed by using (1) the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS), (2) the Federal Government's eRulemaking Portal, or (3) by filing paper copies. See Electronic Filing of Documents in Rulemaking Proceedings, 63 FR 24121 (1998).

- **Electronic Filers:** Comments and reply comments may be filed electronically using the Internet by accessing the ECFS: <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs> or the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Filers should follow the instructions provided on the website for submitting comments.
- **For ECFS Filers:** In completing the transmittal screen, filers should include their full name, U.S. Postal Service mailing address, and the rulemaking number. Parties may also submit an electronic comment by Internet e-mail. To get filing instructions, filers should send an email to [ecfs@fcc.gov](mailto:ecfs@fcc.gov) and include the following words in the body of the message: "get form." A sample form and directions will be sent in response.
- **Paper Filers:** Parties who choose to file by paper must file an original and four copies of each filing.

Filings can be sent by hand or messenger delivery, by commercial overnight courier, or by first-class or overnight U.S. Postal Service mail (although the Commission continues to experience delays in receiving U.S. Postal Service mail). All filings must be addressed to: Secretary, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission.

- The Commission's contractor will receive hand-delivered or messenger-delivered paper filings for the Commission's Secretary at 236 Massachusetts Avenue, NE, Suite 110, Washington, D.C. 20002. The filing hours at this location are 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. All hand deliveries must be held together with rubber bands or fasteners. Any envelopes must be disposed of before entering the building.
- Commercial overnight mail (other than U.S. Postal Service Express Mail and Priority Mail) must be sent to 9300 East Hampton Drive, Capitol Heights, MD 20743.
- U.S. Postal Service first-class, Express, and Priority mail should be addressed to 445 12th Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20554.
- **People with Disabilities:** To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities (Braille, large print, electronic files, audio format), send an email to [fcc504@fcc.gov](mailto:fcc504@fcc.gov) or call the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau at (202) 418-0530 (voice), (202) 418-0432 (tty).

All filings must be addressed to the Commission's Secretary, Marlene H. Dortch, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, 445 12th Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20554. Parties must also serve one copy with the Commission's copy contractor, Best Copy and Printing, Inc. (BCPI), Portals II, 445 12th Street, SW, Room CY-B402, Washington, D.C. 20554, (202) 488-5300, or via email to [fcc@bcpiweb.com](mailto:fcc@bcpiweb.com).

The Plan is available through ECFS at [ecfs@fcc.gov](mailto:ecfs@fcc.gov). Region 2 Plan documents in PS Docket No. 06-229 and WT Docket No. 02-378 are available for public inspection and copying during business hours at the FCC Reference Information Center, Portals II, 445 12th St. SW, Room CY-A257, Washington, D.C. 20554. The documents may also be purchased from BCPI, telephone (202) 488-5300, facsimile (202) 488-5563, TTY (202) 488-5562, email [fcc@bcpiweb.com](mailto:fcc@bcpiweb.com).

For further information regarding this matter, contact Jeannie Benfaida, Policy Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau at (202) 418-2313 or [Jeannie.Benfaida@fcc.gov](mailto:Jeannie.Benfaida@fcc.gov).

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