NG9-1-1 What's Next Forum Report
Frequently Asked Questions

What is NG9-1-1 and why is it important?
Next Generation 9-1-1, or NG9-1-1, will fundamentally change the way emergency responders operate by supporting IP-based communication of voice, text, data, photo and video information from the caller to the 9-1-1 public safety answering point (PSAP). For emergency responders, NG9-1-1 will provide enhanced information about emergency situations, increased reliability of the 9-1-1 network and ease of access to the emergency system, including texting, photo, video, and other data.

Although improving the 9-1-1 system is vitally important for both public and first responder safety, NG9-1-1 will deliver much more than just the option to text and send photos to 9-1-1. This system will allow people new ways to connect with the emergency network, and also provide the opportunity for critical data to flow from, between and among first responder groups.

What is the purpose of the What's Next Forum and Report?
Prior to the creation of the What's Next project, much of the discussion about NG9-1-1 had taken place in the technical arena. The NG9-1-1 What's Next project begins the discussion about how NG9-1-1 can help emergency response groups achieve their missions and increase personnel safety, while also addressing the cultural, organizational and operational environments in which the new system will be implemented. Another fundamental goal of the project is to assist first responders in beginning the process of identifying and prioritizing the types of data the NG9-1-1 system should handle and how (and when) to transmit that data from the PSAP to field-level emergency responders.

The What's Next Forum used a collaborative process to ensure that the developers of the NG9-1-1 system understand the needs and priorities of the nation's emergency responders, including law enforcement, fire–rescue, emergency medical services and transportation operations. Ultimately, the goal of the Forum, and resulting Report, is to get the right information to the right people at the right time.

How was the What's Next project funded?
Under the sponsorship of the U.S. Department of Transportation Intelligent Transportation Systems Joint Program Office and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Transportation Safety Advancement Group (TSAG), in association with ITS America, assembled the NG9-1-1 What's Next working group.

What is TSAG?
TSAG is a multidisciplinary forum promoting technology for public safety and providing guidance to the US DOT ITS Joint Program Office. TSAG is dedicated to promoting traveler safety on the nation's roadways through the application of ITS and related technologies and the refinement of inter-discipline and inter-agency cooperation.

Who was involved in the Forum?
The working group included representatives of four emergency responder groups (ERGs): law enforcement, fire-rescue, emergency medical services, and transportation operations.

Representatives from each of these ERGs were invited to the NG9-1-1 What's Next Forum in Washington, D.C., September 23 and 24, 2010. Following a half-day overview presentation about NG9-1-1 by a nationally respected expert, the panelists broke into four groups, one for each of the four disciplines, for a half-day session. During these breakout sessions, the panelists were asked to identify major challenges facing their professions (to provide context), and to discuss ways in which NG9-1-1 could help them fulfill their missions as emergency responders.

The following stakeholder groups were represented in the Forum.

American Ambulance Association
American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
American College of Emergency Physicians
American College of Osteopathic Emergency Physicians
Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations
Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials - International
Governors Highway Safety Association
I-95 Corridor Coalition
International Association of Chiefs of Police
International Association of Fire Chiefs
International Association of Fire Fighters
National Association of Counties
National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians
National Association of EMS Physicians
National Association of State EMS Officials
National Association of State Fire Marshals
National Emergency Number Association
National Fire Protection Association
National Sheriffs' Association
National Traffic Incident Management Coalition
National Volunteer Fire Council
Transportation Safety Advancement Group

What's in the Report?
The Report, released August 30, 2011, was developed during the second phase of the project, in which NG9-1-1 What's Next ERGs engaged in a series of post-Forum meetings. Each of the four groups identified background issues relevant to its field, consensus points for future collaboration on NG9-1-1, potential obstacles to NG9-1-1 within its respective discipline, desired benefits, potential data points/capabilities to be prioritized, and a suggested process for moving forward. The four groups also developed a comprehensive set of scenarios to illustrate the potential for NG9-1-1 to support their respective missions. Each section of the Report represents the consensus of the panel members involved.

The four groups collaborated independently of one another; however, a number of common concerns emerged in their discussions (listed in no particular order):

- Safety is a top concern.

- Response-related information should be prioritized.

- Overload should be avoided.

- Interoperability is a key consideration.

- Importance of uniform standards underscored.

- NG9-1-1 should be considered a matter of national importance for emergency responder groups.

- Rural agencies' needs must be considered.

- Particular consideration must be paid to the needs of hearing-impaired citizens.

- Stakeholder education is viewed as essential.

- A clear process for future collaboration is likely to build support and buy-in from stakeholder groups.

- Emergency responder agencies will likely require assistance with costs.

Is the Report intended to show local agencies how to implement NG9-1-1?
The What's Next Report is a critical first step in the collaboration across disciplines in addressing the new issues and opportunities presented through NG9-1-1. This report is not a step-by-step recipe for implementing NG9-1-1, but rather a catalyst to facilitate discussion of the process and involvement of ERGs and agencies in the planning stages of the conversion to NG9-1-1.

How can I obtain a copy of the report?
A PDF copy of the complete report is available at www.tsag-its.org.

What comes after the What's Next project?
Each of the four ERGs expressed a desire to continue collaborating on solutions and standards to leverage the benefits of NG9-1-1. The groups recommended convening a national forum to continue the conversation to enhance the safety and efficiency of emergency response disciplines by prioritizing data and discussing the opportunities and challenges involved in the adoption of NG9-1-1.

Additionally, communication and outreach efforts led by TSAG will inform interested individuals and associations of the results of the What's Next Forum discussions and conclusions. At the Federal level, the findings will be shared with each of the agencies involved in NG9-1-1; Department of Justice, the Federal Communications Commission, the Department of Transportation and other stakeholders. Discussion regarding NG9-1-1 in the private sector currently mirrors the public efforts; a number of organizations are involved in the many facets of NG9-1-1 and discussions are ongoing regarding the role each will play in the next steps of NG9-1-1.