



COMMUNICATIONS
& TECHNOLOGY
MANAGEMENT

STRATEGIC PLAN

FY2023 – FY2025



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MESSAGE FROM CHRIS STEWART, CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

First, I would like to say thank you to all of the Communications and Technology Management (CTM) staff who participated in this process. Your input has guided the creation of a meaningful strategic plan that will shape our department’s future. This was truly an employee-driven process with input received from all levels of the organization, our customers, and City leadership.

I would be remiss if I did not recognize the significant changes that have occurred over the past few years that have brought us to this inflection point. First, the pandemic. It completely changed the way the City of Austin functions and brought technology to the forefront. Second, our leadership changes. We have had an influx of new leaders, bringing new energy, new focus, and new determination to our department. These changes have created an opportunity for CTM to be intentional about our future.

Today, with CTM firmly established as the centralized IT leader for the City, we have the opportunity to bring Austin into the technology future. To do so we need to eliminate technical debt, make systems more efficient and effective, and make CTM an incubator for excellence, customer service, and leadership.

As the basis for our strategic plan, CTM staff and leadership worked together to create a new Vision, Mission, and Values for the

department that will set the tone for our culture and set the path for our work. We went further and identified four key focus areas – Our Employees, Technology Improvements and Best Practices, Our Customers, and IT Governance – to further focus our efforts. Each area is championed by CTM staff who have created strategic goals, measures of success, and are in the process of developing solid action plans to reach the identified goals.

The plan will guide the department as we make the necessary changes to improve our operations and processes, identify areas of investment, improve customer service, and empower our employees through training and development.

To be successful in achieving our mission and accomplishing the goals set forth in this plan, we must make this plan a living, breathing document, and part of our everyday work. The leadership team and I are excited about the initiatives outlined in the Strategic Plan and are eager to get started on implementation.

I believe in the value that CTM provides to the City and believe this plan will guide improvements, push us towards our goals, and provide significant benefits to our customers and stakeholders.

CHRIS STEWART
Chief Information Officer, City of Austin



STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The Communications and Technology Management (CTM) department initiated a strategic planning process in March 2022 to update its vision, mission, values, and develop a framework for guiding the department into the future. The strategic framework presented in this document will help guide investments, allocate resources, and provide a structure for regular progress updates to ensure strategic goals are achieved and issues are addressed.

The Communications and Technology Management (CTM) department initiated a strategic planning process in March 2022 to update its vision, mission, and values for guiding the department into the future.

CTM’s strategic planning process was designed to ensure:

- ▶ **A shared vision of the department’s ultimate goals.** Organizations driven by explicit purposes and shared values have a greater capacity to succeed than those that are not. Collectively, more than 100 CTM employees and City of Austin stakeholders provided input to articulate the organization’s shared vision.
- ▶ **A collective understanding of the available resources, the environment, and the principles upon which strategies will be based.** Each of CTM’s employees had the opportunity to participate in the planning process through a department-wide survey, individual interviews, and/or focus groups.
- ▶ **Acceptance of the direction and urgency of the Strategic Plan, which will be integrated into the way the department operates on a daily basis.** The project team shared the strategic framework with employees, City leadership, and external departments to ensure acceptance across the City of Austin.

2022 Strategic Plan Timeline

Ultimately, broad involvement in strategic planning improves the plan’s acceptance and increases the chances of successful implementation. CTM’s strategic planning process included inclusive engagement and took approximately six months to complete.

- ▶ **MARCH – APRIL**
 - Strategic planning steering committee kicked off the project and identified external trends that will impact CTM’s operations over the next five years
 - Project team interviewed CTM department leadership and key employees from other City of Austin departments
- ▶ **MAY**
 - Project team released a survey to all CTM staff
 - More than 100 employees responded to the survey, providing important qualitative and quantitative data for framework development
- ▶ **MAY – JUNE**
 - Eight focus groups were held with CTM staff
 - Project team met with the steering committee to review stakeholder feedback
 - A strategic planning retreat was held with the steering committee and leadership to review and provide direction based on stakeholder feedback, as well as to draft a preliminary strategic framework including a vision, mission, values, and focus areas
- ▶ **JULY**
 - Project team met with key stakeholders at the City of Austin to provide a status update and discuss the draft strategic framework
 - Steering committee met to finalize the framework language
- ▶ **AUGUST – SEPTEMBER**
 - Working groups of CTM staff met to draft success statements, strategies, and key performance indicators (KPIs) for each of the focus areas
 - CTM leadership reviewed and finalized the full strategic framework and plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

The City of Austin is the capital and fourth largest city in the State of Texas. Austin is one of the top 15 most populous cities in the United States with a population of approximately 962,000 according to the US Census Bureau. The surrounding metropolitan area boasts a population of more than 2.3 million people. The City is located within the central portion of the state in Travis, Hays, and Williamson Counties.

The City is an art and cultural hub with the official slogan of “Live Music Capital of the World”, which the City earned through its nearly 200 live music venues and through hosting several large music festivals including SXSW and Austin City Limits. SXSW was founded in 1987 and has evolved over the years to include film, television, and comedy festivals in addition to the music festival, as well as a conference that explores topics within government and politics, technology, innovation, and more. To further emphasize the City’s unique culture, the Austin Independent Business Alliance adopted the slogan “Keep Austin Weird” to promote local businesses. While this is an unofficial slogan for the City, it has become synonymous with Austin denoting it as a place for new, creative, and innovative ideas.



Since 2010, the City has seen a tremendous amount of growth, with the City’s population increasing by 21% between 2010 and 2020 according to the most recent Census data. In addition to population growth, Austin has become a hub for technology companies. According to the Austin Chamber of Commerce, as of 2021, there are nearly 9,600 employers in high-tech industries accounting for 16.7% of all jobs in the Austin metro area. Among these companies are Dell, Advanced Micro Devices, Intel, 3M, IBM, Samsung, NXP Semiconductors, and National Instruments. Tesla also recently opened a 10 million square foot Gigafactory near the City of Austin to serve as the company’s global headquarters and the U.S. manufacturing hub for the Model Y compact SUV and Cybertruck.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

To enable service delivery to Austin residents and businesses, the City of Austin has several IT functions across its organizational structure. CTM is the City of Austin’s principal information technology (IT) department and focuses on the delivery and operations of vital IT infrastructure network and telecommunications services, continuous service improvement, and technology solutions to enable customer success. CTM also teams up with regional partners to improve public safety communication throughout Central Texas. Overall, the department provides internal and external business partners with reliable and efficient technology services to assist them in meeting their information needs and business goals.

CTM, like many information technology departments in municipalities across the country, continually balances its role as the centralized IT service provider with the needs of its customer departments and residents. This can be a difficult task, given that several other departments within the City of Austin, including enterprise departments, maintain their own embedded IT staff while others rely on CTM to be their sole technology provider. To assist the department in navigating this delicate

balance, Austin’s City Manager issued a memo in February 2022 that defined the role and responsibilities of the City of Austin’s Chief Information Officer (CIO) which serves as the CTM Director as well.

The CIO and CTM are responsible for overseeing the IT operations for the City of Austin, including IT planning and investment management, operational responsibilities, IT governance, and privacy and security.



CTM RESPONSIBILITIES

CTM is the City of Austin’s principal information technology department and focuses on the delivery and operations of vital IT infrastructure network and telecommunications services, continuous service improvement, and solutions to enable customer success. CTM also teams up with regional partners to improve public safety communication throughout Central Texas. CTM’s various roles and responsibilities are summarized below.

IT Planning & Investment Management

- ▶ Lead IT strategic planning, technology investment planning, and IT continuity of operations planning
- ▶ Manage multi-departmental IT contracts and prioritize budget needs for enterprise applications

Operational Responsibilities

- ▶ Manage enterprise IT infrastructure
- ▶ Prioritize replacement of legacy systems and components
- ▶ Maintain an IT portfolio and asset management system
- ▶ Align resources to support the City’s strategic direction and goals
- ▶ Deliver technology architecture design, review, and transition planning

IT Governance

- ▶ Ensure investments deliver business value to the City departments and residents
- ▶ Align investments to the City’s strategic goals and business needs

Privacy & Security

- ▶ Ensure data privacy and security solutions are implemented and managed to meet City policies



EXTERNAL TRENDS

The context in which CTM operates is impacted by several trends, including those related to workforce, cybersecurity and risk, technology, and customer expectations. Those trends are discussed in the following sections.

TREND: Workforce Changes

The City of Austin has a highly competitive labor market fueled by the significant growth the region has experienced. CTM is challenged to attract and retain highly skilled and talented employees, especially as compared to the numerous private sector technology companies located within the region. Currently, the department is working to fill vacancies and a large percentage of its workforce is eligible for retirement in the next three to five years. To combat the vacancies and impending turnover, CTM is utilizing a variety of flexible sourcing for highly technical and specific purposes. At least in the short-term, this practice provides CTM with the necessary staffing to perform day-to-day operations.

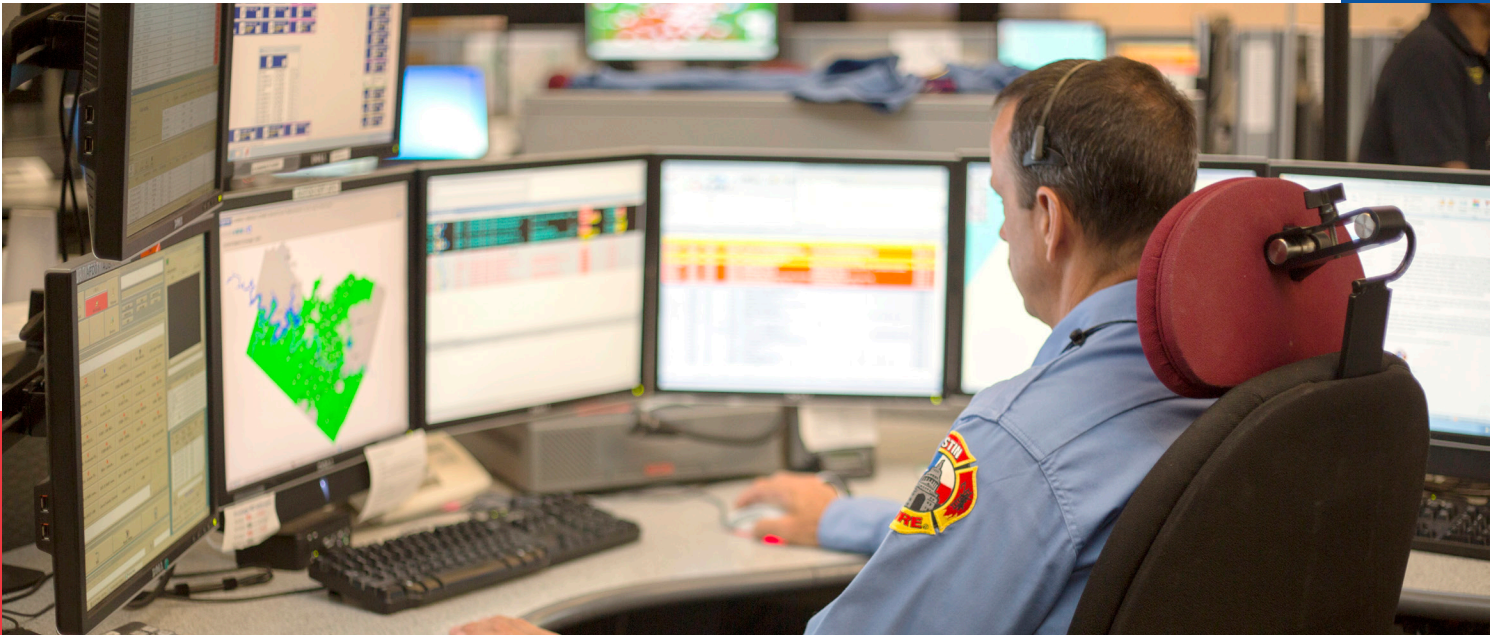
Anecdotal information suggests that long-term benefits have become less enticing to prospective employees, who tend to change jobs more frequently. Demonstrating CTM’s value to the community is vital to attracting and retaining staff. Improved succession planning will also be important, both to minimize the institutional knowledge loss caused by retirements and other turnover and to ensure that employees are prepared to assume higher-level responsibilities when positions open within CTM. Nationally, the information technology industry is evolving and rapidly changing the skills and competencies required. Employees, therefore, need to have higher levels of certifications and technical expertise.

The City of Austin has a highly competitive labor market fueled by the significant high-tech growth the region has experienced.

TREND: Cybersecurity and Risk

Cities maintain the extensive IT infrastructure necessary to ensure public safety and service delivery, as well as to collect and maintain large amounts of data, including the personal information of residents. For these reasons, cybersecurity is hypercritical. Municipal IT departments need to protect the systems, data, and technology infrastructure and embed cybersecurity in everything they do. As technology evolves, the need for enhanced cybersecurity becomes even more critical. Nationally, the COVID-19 pandemic also raised the need for enhanced cybersecurity measures, due to the decentralization of access to city systems and the increased number of employees operating in remote environments. Cities can also be vulnerable to ransomware attacks and hacking attempts.

Focusing on creating a culture of security across the City of Austin will assist CTM in mitigating cybersecurity risks. CTM is enhancing its monitoring capabilities to detect and prevent threats. Continuing to build talent pools and increasing skills development will also keep staff knowledge current regarding threats and how to protect the City's IT infrastructure and technology solutions. CTM is also focused on enhancing and leveraging emerging mobile technology to find solutions to the decentralized environment and assist with remote work while preserving security.



TREND: Technology Advances

The City of Austin has a reputation as an innovation hub. This reputation puts pressure on the City to have advanced technology and software systems and for CTM to set technology trends and be a best in class organization. Technology, however, changes rapidly. It is difficult for the department to perform change management or continuously add resources to keep pace with the changing IT environment. Enabling CTM to react quickly, identify, and adopt emerging technologies will help keep the City on the cutting edge. However, as this is done, improvements to the existing infrastructure will need to be prioritized and incorporated into funding plans.

Additionally, throughout the City of Austin, there are legacy programs and technology that continue to be supported by CTM. These programs are often maintained even as new technologies are brought in. Centralization of the technology and the pursuit of enterprise and evergreen solutions for the City of Austin will help streamline operations and eliminate redundant legacy programs. As new solutions are implemented, it will be important to incorporate sunset plans to phase out these legacy programs. Training staff on these solutions will further ensure that employee skillsets are not stagnating.



In addition to the pandemic increasing cybersecurity risks, it changed the operating environment of technology solutions. Non-essential personnel across the country found themselves working from the office one day and remotely the next. This massive workplace shift required CTM, and other municipal IT departments, to react quickly. CTM ensured that the City of Austin continued to provide high-level services to the community without disruption. The impact of the pandemic on the workplace will continue far into the future and the option for employees to work remotely is likely to remain. Currently, CTM employees may live anywhere in the State of Texas if their jobs do not require onsite work. The department's ability to support mobile technology and the implementation of cloud-based solutions will allow CTM to navigate the remote working environment and mitigate service disruptions.

TREND: Customer Expectations

Austin's reputation as a hub for innovation extends beyond the need for cutting-edge technology; it also leads to high customer expectations for services. Personal technology has become advanced and has enabled people to do things easily from anywhere, and residents want the ability to find out answers or resolve a problem quickly. Employees want that same easy access when working. Furthermore, as technology evolves, the services it provides increases. For example, technology is now used for electronic payments, permitting, vendor contracting, and more. The shift to using technology for more and more services has made customers (internal and external) see IT as a utility and created the expectation that everything should simply work.

Customer expectations around what technology should do and how efficient and effective it should be will continue to increase. To appropriately set expectations, CTM is creating and maintaining an up-to-date defined service catalog to help customers understand what the capabilities and limitations of the currently implemented solutions are. Communication with customers will build awareness and lead to conversations that define business needs and identify technology gaps. With this knowledge, CTM can identify future technology solutions to further improve service delivery and drive the City of Austin forward.



SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS, OPPORTUNITIES, ASPIRATIONS, CRITICAL ISSUES

Leveraging the input received from employees and stakeholders, CTM conducted analysis as an initial step in developing its strategic framework. The sections below show representative themes that arose from that input.

STRENGTHS

- ▶ Crisis/emergency response and management
- ▶ Skilled and invested employees
- ▶ CTM's organizational culture
- ▶ The focus on cloud technology
- ▶ Continuous improvement and investment in emerging technology, equipment, and innovation
- ▶ Reliable IT infrastructure
- ▶ Workplace flexibility

OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ Improve understanding of customer needs to better support and implement solutions
- ▶ Improve collaboration to develop and fix enterprise systems and programs
- ▶ Enhance employee recruitment, training, leadership development, and retention
- ▶ Increase collaboration and leadership around vulnerability planning and disaster recovery
- ▶ Develop and define core services and solutions
- ▶ Use technology to improve, standardize, and automate processes
- ▶ Increase utilization of cloud technology

ASPIRATIONS

- ▶ Technology and innovation leadership
- ▶ The IT service provider of choice
- ▶ Effective communication with partners and awareness of new customer needs
- ▶ Effective technology asset management
- ▶ IT is part of everyday decision making
- ▶ Proactive, scalable enterprise-wide solutions
- ▶ Automation, continuous improvement, education, and training
- ▶ A distributed IT environment with a centralized governance structure

CRITICAL ISSUES

- ▶ Combatting customization with low maintenance, simple, low code programs
- ▶ Improving workforce planning to identify new ways to recruit and retain talent and address staff turnover and retirements
- ▶ Improving asset management, human capital management, and contract management
- ▶ Improving solution delivery to best meet customer needs
- ▶ Improving implementation of new software systems
- ▶ Improving security posture

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

VISION

To be a best-in-class model for trusted technology solutions and leadership.

MISSION

CTM delivers technology solutions that make the City work.

FOCUS AREAS

- ▶ Our Employees
- ▶ Technology Improvements and Best Practices
- ▶ Our Customers
- ▶ IT Governance

VALUES

Integrity

It's as simple as doing what's right and treating people with respect. It's how we make decisions, the way we treat our customers, and the way we treat each other. It is the foundation for our work and our reputation. By acting with integrity, we earn the respect and trust of our partners and teammates.

Service

We contribute to the greater good and know that our actions make a positive impact. We have a genuine interest in improving the City. We share a helpful, determined spirit to add value and make the City a better place. We are committed to serving our customers, serving the City, and serving each other.

Diversity

There is strength in diversity. We are stronger because of each individual on our team. Every person is respected and valued. Together we thrive with diverse voices to challenge, educate, and inform decisions. We believe that seeking diversity in all its dimensions encourages innovation and creativity.

Collaboration

Together, we can do great things. We rely on each other to find solutions. It is only through collaboration and teamwork that we can reach our goals. We are committed to building strong partnerships inside and outside of CTM to innovate, explore, and deliver effective technology.

Drive

We have passion and purpose. We set a high bar for ourselves and are determined to continuously improve. We are resilient, resourceful and see challenges as opportunities. We choose to be here. We are dedicated. We are driven to make a difference.



Ensure all employees feel valued through engagement, recognition, and investment in diverse growth and development opportunities.

Strategies

- ▶ Improve employee satisfaction within CTM
- ▶ Expand and improve inclusion and engagement opportunities
- ▶ Expand employee recognition
- ▶ Develop our employees with training and provide technical career lattices

KPIs

- ▶ Improve CTM results in Listening to the Workforce Employee Satisfaction survey
- ▶ Establish and improve Net Promoter score
- ▶ Increase percentage of recognition nominations and awards
- ▶ Track promotional numbers internal to department
- ▶ Increase satisfaction and use of employee development, training, and resources



Our employees are our greatest asset. They are hardworking, committed, and value their service to the City of Austin.

Projects in progress to support this Focus Area:

- Improvements to culture and engagement
- Expansion of recognition program
- Developed new employee orientation
- Analysis of hiring process

Deliver quality, reliable solutions in partnership with our stakeholders.



Strategies

- ▶ Reduce technical debt by implementing an application and asset life-cycle management approach
- ▶ Assess current operations to identify gaps and inform SOP development, process improvement, and incorporation of best practices
- ▶ Enhance customer convenience and self-service options
- ▶ Support technology-focused training and development to promote industry best-practices

KPIs

- ▶ Improve response and resolution times
- ▶ Increase percentage of projects managed by the Enterprise PMO completed on time and on budget
- ▶ Ensure all essential systems (as defined in the CTM Continuity of Operations Plan) meet Recovery Time Objective (RTO) requirements
- ▶ Ensure all systems are maintained according to manufacturer standards regarding security patches or maintenance releases per the Citywide Patch Management Policy

We are laser focused on technology improvements. Through modern technology and integrations, CTM can assist the City deliver value to our residents and visitors.

Projects in progress to support this Focus Area:

- Development of IT Asset Management Program
- Reduction of technical debt
- Development of cloud strategy

Cultivate confident and trusting relationships with business partners to increase value and create shared success.



Supporting our customers is our primary purpose. Ensuring they have the right technology solutions is paramount.

Projects in progress to support this Focus Area:

- Establish CTM’s service catalog
- Update SLA and Partnership Agreements
- Streamline intake process for business solution requests

Strategies

- ▶ Improve the customer experience
- ▶ Increase the understanding and support of departmental business needs
- ▶ Ensure quality of our work

KPIs

- ▶ Increase percentage of tickets that achieved first call resolution
- ▶ Improve customer satisfaction rating after service request or project close-out
- ▶ Increase the percentage of CTM-supported departments with technology roadmaps that have been updated within the last six months
- ▶ Increase number of Partnership Agreements completed
- ▶ Decrease percentage of tickets closed that were reopened

Develop an agile, sustainable, and cohesive governance structure with opportunity for engagement that provides a framework to enable effective and timely technology decisions.

Strategies

- ▶ Establish an effective IT Governance Framework
- ▶ Provide visibility into the governance boards to increase awareness and information sharing
- ▶ Promote effective IT governance through development and use of standardized tools

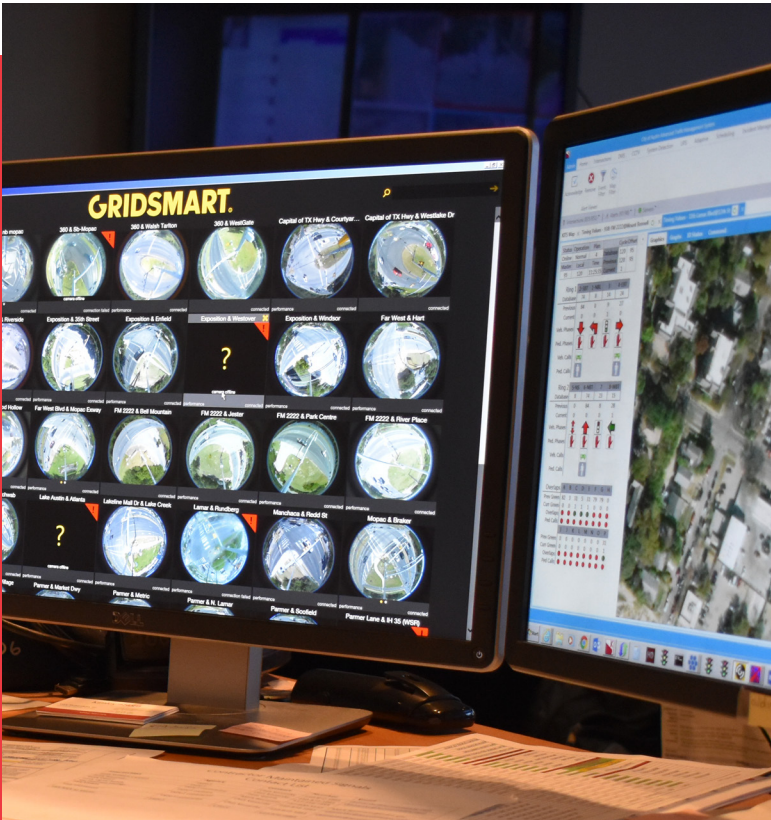
KPIs

- ▶ Increase the percentage of governing bodies with prioritized initiatives
- ▶ Increase the review of documents created by the governance boards to at least every 18 months
- ▶ Increase percentage of scheduled governance meetings conducted with over 70% participation from the defined membership
- ▶ Increase the percentage of charters reflecting new IT Governance Framework

The CIO and CTM are responsible for prioritizing, funding, and rightsizing the use of IT resources. Healthy governance is imperative to make effective decisions as we move the City of Austin forward.

Projects in progress to support this Focus Area:

- Revitalizing the IT Steering Committee
- Review of existing governing boards





COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

[austintexas.gov/department/
information-technology](https://austintexas.gov/department/information-technology)

CTM...

Employs nearly **400** employees across three divisions

Supports **15,000** City employees through the Service Desk

Maintains **488** miles of fiber optic cable across the City

Has digitized **504** paper forms to date

Supports and maintains **8,500** public safety partner-end devices

