

City of Gulfport Florida

# Information Technology Strategic Plan



*Gulfport's Technology Principles,  
Objectives and Strategies*

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## *Gulfport's Technology Principles, Objectives and Strategies*

### **Background**

The Information Technology Department was established in October 1998 and reports directly to the City Manager. Prior to October 1998 it was known as the Management Information Services Division and was under the Administrative Services Department. An Information Technology Director was hired in February of 1999. The Director was charged with the responsibility of creating a vision for the City's IT needs and implement and maintain such systems when they came online.

In 1997 the City developed the first technology plan (called the "MIS Plan"). This plan was a three-year forecast of IT needs and goals. This was the beginning of creating a defined technology direction for the City.

At that time the City began to solidify its technology infrastructure. The H T E system, an AS/400 based system, was connected to the City's local area network (LAN) and to a few dumb terminals using a modular cabling system. Fiber Optic cabling between buildings in the Municipal Complex allowed a seamless network connection for all users. Direct Internet access was established using the state communication network.

Since February 1999 the City network has been expanded to include scheduling and email capabilities using Microsoft Outlook and the inclusion of off-site departments. The successful conversion/replacement of all Year 2000 susceptible hardware and software was completed, as well as the implementation of live television broadcasts of City meetings, with a replay the following morning. The City's first official website was also created ([WWW.CI.GULFPORT.FL.US](http://WWW.CI.GULFPORT.FL.US)) and a new means for public interaction with the City was established.

In February 2003 the City developed the first wireless internet zone. The Gulfport Wireless Internet Zone(GWIZ) covers the entire City Marina area and is free to all.

In anticipation of replacing the AS/400 with windows server based software a Network Administrator was hired in May 2003. City Council approved the move away from proprietary systems to less expensive hardware independent server based systems. With the help of more the \$225,000 in state and federal grant money the Police Department went live in December 2003. The Finance Department went live on their new system in January 2004.

In June 2005 all responsibilities for the local government channel 15 was transferred to the IT department. New robotic cameras, an integrated production suite and a new bulletin board system were purchased with the assistance of a partial grant from Bright House Networks.

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## **Gulfport Information Technology Mission Statement**

The Information Technology Department supports City operations through the application of effective and efficient technology. These services include website development, system maintenance, training, departmental computer access, and coordination of all data processing related expenditures.

## **Information Technology Guiding Principles**

The following principles are key statements of direction related to Information Technology (IT) and its ability to serve as an enabler to meet the needs and goals of the City government. These guiding principles are intended to provide an environment in which the City can achieve its objectives related to providing high level customer service. The principles are interrelated and meant to provide a cohesive approach to IT. While objectives and strategies are defined for each principle, they must be viewed within the context of the total environment described in this section of the plan.

- Support the objectives of the City government
- Conduct City objectives, electronically or face-to-face, based on human needs.
- Treat information as a strategic resource
- View technology investments from an enterprise perspective
- Ensure electronic access to information and services while maintaining privacy

## **Technology Objectives and Strategies Related to Principles**

### **Principle One: Support the objectives of the City government**

**Objective - Establishment of a Technology Committee to ensure an effective IT investment**

#### Strategies

1. Establish a Technology Committee made up of the City Manager, all Department Directors, City Clerk and their assistants to meet quarterly. The

purpose of the committee would be to coordinate technology uses between departments. Committee members would discuss technology needs and uses in their departments. Equipment standards would be established and updated as needed. Recommendations for technology replacement would be made. Technology purchases would be coordinated in order to take advantage of vendor volume discounts.

2. Integrate technology planning with City objectives to ensure alignment of IT with City goals. Technology planning and organizational planning must be integrated to ensure that limited IT resources are being used to support the main goals and objectives of both the departments and the City.

**Objective - Assess City processes for effectiveness before applying information technology solutions**

Strategies

1. Continually examine best practices of other departments, governments or private sector organizations for potential application to City process improvements.
2. Existing information systems may require modification to adequately address changes which have occurred in City practices, accommodate new requirements, or continue to support requirements effectively and efficiently.

**Principle Two: Conduct City operations electronically**

**Objective - Utilize electronic commerce technologies to reduce costs and improve service**

Strategies

1. Utilize electronic transactions, as opposed to manual transactions, for conducting normal internal processes such as using direct deposit rather than printing a paper check.
2. Utilize wherever possible Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), electronic signatures, and World Wide Web (WWW) based transactions. These will facilitate transacting objectives utilizing electronic means thus reducing time and transaction costs.

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### **Objective - Promote increased use of electronic communication**

#### Strategies

1. Maximize the usage of electronic mail and workflow to improve communication and improve service. Electronic mail will be used to reduce the number of paper memos and the amount of time necessary to communicate with employees, citizens, and business partners.
2. Use Internet/Intranet technologies for information access and dissemination, citizen services and City transactions. The internet/intranet will be used to provide employees, citizens and business partner's access to City information.

### **Objective - Enable City operations to be conducted electronically**

#### Strategies

1. Update policies to allow acceptance of electronic transactions in lieu of paper forms. Policies, which currently stipulate that information, be provided in paper format will be modified to allow, encourage, or require suitable electronic alternatives unless specifically prohibited by state law.
2. The City will continue to provide its citizens with fast, efficient government services through the expanded use of information technology.
3. The City will build upon the structures and organization in place to allow government services to be obtained from homes, schools, libraries, and other public locations.

### **Objective - Convert paper forms, publications and manual processes to electronic formats**

#### Strategies

1. Reengineer processes to utilize electronic forms for City transactions. Current processes should be evaluated to determine if the data could be captured and stored electronically through the use of electronic forms, word processing or a spreadsheet.
2. Utilize electronic publishing and distribution such as CD ROM and the WWW for large documents. The cost of producing documents will be reduced as well as increasing accessibility and ease of maintenance.

### **Principle Three: Treat information as a strategic resource**

#### **Objective - Organize and utilize information as an enterprise asset**

##### Strategies

1. Information should be shared and exchanged electronically to avoid transcribing and manual re-entry of the data. This will improve data accuracy, allow sharing of data and improve services.
2. Establish effective electronic records management policies and procedures. These policies and procedures will ensure that City data is maintained, protected, archived and disposed of as appropriate.
3. Protect information through effective security and authentication policies and procedures. Policies should be developed which will facilitate the sharing of information while protecting the validity and retention of the data.

### **Principle Four: View technology investments from an enterprise perspective**

#### **Objective - Provide leadership to encourage the effective use of technology**

##### Strategies

1. Continue to ensure that all technology related purchases are approved through the IT Department.
2. Revise and publish the IT Strategic Plan on a consistent basis. This document will be revised to reflect the City government's approach to the utilization of information technology, changing objectives and changes in the information technology marketplace.
3. Provide ongoing education and awareness of IT capabilities for Department Directors.
4. Participate in state and county standard setting and regulatory efforts. Participation in these groups provides the City with the opportunity to influence the direction of standards and to receive advance notice of the future direction of IT.

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## **Objective - Leverage the existing information technology infrastructure**

### Strategies

1. Continue to provide network support to ensure compatibility and quality. The network is a critical portion of the technology infrastructure. An enterprise approach to network design, development, and maintenance, which encompasses both wide area and local area network standards, will ensure network compatibility and improve network service.
2. Continue to provide electronic mail support and services. Electronic mail is a critical service for communication among City employees, external agencies, and citizens.
3. Continue an enterprise strategy to provide remote access into the City Wide Area Network (WAN) to support City objectives being conducted in a mobile computing environment.

## **Objective - Ensure appropriate acquisition of information technology**

### Strategies

1. Procure technology goods and services in accordance with the current architecture and standards. All technology related purchases should be approved by the IT Director.
2. The City should simplify the acquisition of technology items, such as PCs, printers and office automation software, through the use of the State of Florida purchasing contracts.

## **Objective - Forge partnerships with agencies, vendors and other government entities**

### Strategies

1. Evaluate potential partnerships with local governments through projects. These partnerships should provide improved services, an expanded IT infrastructure and potential cost savings for both agencies.
2. The City should have an increased awareness of, and emphasis on, architectures and applications that can be shared, reused, and transferred among departments and between outside agencies.



**Principle Five: Ensure electronic access to information and services while maintaining privacy**

**Objective - Provide access to information resources to City employees and citizens**

**Strategies**

1. Provide consistent and widespread access to key information resources such as the Internet, while addressing confidentiality and privacy concerns. Increased access to information will improve service to citizens and enable employees to be more productive.
2. Electronic information resources will be protected and secure, ensuring continuous government service delivery, even in cases of emergency or disaster

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