

2012-2016

FORT BEND COUNTY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STRATEGIC PLAN

RAY WEBB, DIRECTOR





Message from the Director of Information Technology (CIO)

Greetings!

The Information Technology Department (IT) is pleased to present its 2012-2016 Strategic Plan. This plan outlines the key strategic initiatives which will be the focus for the coming year and beyond. This plan will be reviewed and published yearly. It will be used as the Information Technology roadmap to better enable the County to meet the challenges of these uncertain times.

The use of technology tightly aligned with business needs is essential in providing services for the citizens and the businesses of Fort Bend County. Many will embrace the use of modern technology in their dealings with the County while others will require introduction to these methods of conducting business. Our goal is to provide feasible and convenient choices for our constituents. The upcoming technology investments will be made wisely and will be justified through measureable gains and/or benefits.

This plan is a collaborative effort involving IT and the governance teams across the County, guided by the priorities developed by Commissioner Court. We strongly believe it serves the best interests of the County by putting in place an attainable vision that will allow us to meet our objectives.

I would like to acknowledge the collaboration by the members of my staff, the IT Leadership Team, and the elected officials and department heads who contributed their time and valuable insight into this plan. We will continue to work together to transform Fort Bend County Information Technology to best serve the current needs of the County and fulfill the needs of the future. It is my pleasure to serve as the head of your Information Technology organization.

Regards,

Ray Webb
Director of Information Technology (CIO)

*“Leave the beaten track occasionally and dive into the woods.
You will be certain to find something you have never seen before.”*
- Alexander Graham Bell

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Executive Summary

The content of this document reflects a substantial amount of fact-gathering and collaboration between Information Technology (IT) leadership and the organizations IT supports. Commissioners Court, the governance teams, and various other office and department leaders have provided business focused input into this document. Specific technology requirements from the business units of Fort Bend County are included in the strategy statements, along with high level goals that support them. It should all culminate into an understanding of the partnership role IT is playing within the business units, and how IT is providing, and will continue to provide, business value to the County offices and departments.

The format of the document is based on four categories: **County Business Objectives, Information Technology Governance and Principles, Information Technology Services and Sourcing, and Risks and Issues.**

The **County Business Objectives** category basically begins with the list of the County's highest level business objectives. These ten objective statements are taken from various County documents, and members of Commissioners Court. These high level perspectives focus on the County business objectives and responsibilities to the general public. The statements obviously rely on IT partnership and support, and several address the provisioning of public services in a timely, fiscally responsible manner which requires dependable and effective IT. To support these highest level business objectives, the remaining content of this category focuses on lower level, more specific, key initiatives from the four governance teams. There are several common themes that range from asset, contract, records and document management needs, to business collaboration and disaster readiness needs. IT has also identified base level requirements which are necessary to provide technology support for their business partners.

The **Information Technology Governance and Principles** category is a high level definition of the principles that guide IT decision making and the governance process. The primary "take away" from this section is to explain how and why the principles will guide IT decisions that should only contribute to business success. The decision making points range from investments in infrastructure, architecture and security to application projects and processes, as well as the mechanisms utilized to effectively communicate and enforce the governance process.

The **Information Technology Services and Sourcing** category includes the IT services provided to the County and how they are sourced and delivered. Enterprise class applications, some specialized applications, and the standard communications services are provided throughout the County departments and offices. These services are all reviewed by the County IT organization, approved by Commissioners Court and procured through Purchasing under agreements jointly developed by the business units, IT, Purchasing and the County Attorney's Office. The products and services are installed and supported either totally as a service from vendors, or needed components are procured, assembled and installed by vendors and the County IT employees.

The **IT Services and Sourcing** goals are to:

- Gain efficiencies, economy of scale and ultimately to be more cost effective.
- Build and service a common portfolio of services
- To make Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) and Return on Investment (ROI) a part of our decision making criteria.

The **Risks and Issues** category addresses those key potential areas, items, etc. that can stand in the way, or prohibit the County from accomplishing the necessary deliverables, as outlined in this strategic plan. Primary risks range from insufficient stakeholder engagement to inadequate and timely funding.

Introduction

This strategic plan represents, in part, the culmination of many key milestones the IT organization has accomplished during the last nine years in Fort Bend County. Although much has changed since the “old MIS days”, the strategy outlined within this document is only the beginning of an opportunistic, but challenging, future for IT, but more importantly for the business partners IT supports. IT is maturing as a key partner in the provision of our County business and government responsibilities, working hand in hand with the County offices and departments.

A little history:

- 1979 – Data Processing (D.P.) had 3 employees
- 1979 – only two County departments supported by D.P.
- 1992 – name changed to Management Information Systems (M.I.S.)
- 2002 – 35 full time & 2 part time employees
- 2002 – 67+ departments supported by M.I.S.
- 2004 – functional business governance teams were formed
- 2005 – 39 full time employees
- 2005 – 73+ departments supported by M.I.S.
- 2005 – name changed from M.I.S. to Information Technology (IT)

In 2004, four business focused governance teams were formed, and they have collaboratively functioned to make business decisions that attempt to take integrative and coordinated steps towards satisfying their respective department and office responsibilities. IT has been a key and proactive member of each of these teams.

Major enterprise systems (Enterprise Resource Planning – ERP systems) have been acquired, modified and installed which enable the businesses represented on these teams to accomplish their missions and goals for the County. These systems are continually upgraded to meet the County’s requirements. The predominant theme on each of these teams is partnership, and proactive sharing and learning together.

The four governance teams include:

- **The IT Leadership Team** is primarily comprised of those in leadership roles who are responsible for providing IT services. This team also has some members that have keen interests and needs for IT service and are not represented on the other teams. ***The primary function of this team is to facilitate a common IT Business Strategy, to nurture a partnership between the providers and the users of IT services, and promote sharing of technology resources across the County.*** This team has continually worked, since it was organized, together with key business leaders for decision making and planning of technology infrastructure, applications and customer service.
- **The Judicial Steering Team (JST)** acquired the Odyssey system, and coordinated the deployment of this complex and integrative technology throughout the judicial branch of the County government. Since Odyssey was deployed, the Judicial Steering Team has continued to work together on Odyssey enhancements and other business process improvements.

- **The Finance and Human Capital Steering Team (F&HC Team)** acquired the Lawson system, and implemented it to be the technology foundation for much of the County financial and HR services. This team worked closely in deciding to upgrade Lawson in 2011 and then monitored the progress of the successful implementation.
- **The Public Infrastructure Steering Committee (PISC)** is led by IT and regularly meets to share ideas, recommendations and planning of integrative approaches to solving their respective department issues. Several years ago, IT developed a permit tracking application which is shared and utilized effectively by multiple PISC departments. The team continues to meet regularly and is involved in many successful collaborative efforts, some of which involve IT, as well as other common business issues.

Most of the larger departments across the County are represented on these teams. Recently, the Health and Human Services department has agreed to become active members of the IT Leadership Team. While neither the Transportation Department nor the Tax Office is represented on a governance team, IT is heavily involved with them, as well as other departments and offices not represented, in an effort to make sure their voices are heard.

IT has focused on establishing a solid foundation for the business applications and communication technologies to function effectively. There has been substantial remodeling, reconfiguration, enhancements and replacements of communication, database, business application and web based technologies. Many additional upgrades are necessary and already underway. Some remain in the planning stages. ***We continually find ourselves running non-stop to keep up with evolving business requirements and changing technology capabilities. We must plan, in motion, as we are required to move faster and faster.***

It is time to take a check point and evaluate our current strategic plans which we have followed over the past few years, and modify them to better reflect what our governance teams have been learning and telling us as part of the governance team process. This strategic plan represents that check point, and has been established from substantial input from the highest County leadership throughout the many offices and departments that make up our governance process. The Executive Summary in the previous section of this document, provides a snapshot of the strategy, and how IT is posturing to enhance the business value of the County organizations it partners with.

Mission Statements

Fort Bend County's Mission

Fort Bend County strives to be the most family friendly community in Texas by providing a high quality, enriching and safe environment. Each department and elective office provides fast, friendly service to its customers and continually strives to be number one in efficiency and effectiveness. The Commissioners Court fulfills its leadership role by providing necessary resources to the offices and departments to accomplish their duties and goals, by establishing budgets, policies and procedures to make the most efficient uses of the resources and by actively pursuing quality businesses to locate in Fort Bend County.

Fort Bend County Information Technology Department Mission

The mission of the Information Technology (I.T.) Department is to provide information technology services to support County business programs, customer departments and offices, and taxpayers in the most efficient, equitable and economical methods possible by leveraging technology resources.

Fort Bend County Information Technology Department Vision

Establish and execute a strategic IT plan that will align with and support business programs and initiatives in a fiscally responsible manner. Understand the business processes and identify the technology that will enable government-to-government, government-to-business, and government-to-citizen functions through a process of establishing goals, objectives, and priorities.

County Business Objectives

The following business objectives were derived from the County's long-term comprehensive plan, with edits as directed by members of Commissioners Court.

1. Assure that the County is a safe and attractive place to live, work and play.
2. Utilize state-of-the-art equipment and methods appropriately in the provision and timely delivery of authorized and allowed services.
 - o Each department and elective office desires to provide fast, friendly service to its customers.
 - o Strive to improve efficiency/effectiveness.
3. Provide the necessary support for mobility and transportation, (mass public transportation), needs in the County.
4. Promote a favorable environment for retaining and expanding existing businesses while attracting a wide variety of new businesses to provide employment opportunities.
 - o Prepare for increased growth.
5. Support environmental concerns for preservation of natural and historic resources balanced with sensitivity to the needs of development and recreation.
6. Encourage cultural development and ethnic diversity.
7. Develop a quality, consumer sensitive, holistic approach to health and human services that keeps pace with the County's growth.
8. Actively seek to increase and coordinate volunteerism and active citizen participation that strives for the good of the County as a whole.
9. Work cooperatively with other governmental entities to complement their efforts.
10. Operate the County government in the most fiscally responsible manner.
 - o All departments are required to operate in a fiscally responsible manner – make each dollar produce the most service.
 - o No tax increases - plan each budget accordingly

Strategy

Our strategy is based upon a 3 year perspective that will be reviewed and republished yearly. At a high level, the strategy focuses on methods to:

- Enhance Information Technology's leadership role through the delivery and support of reliable, innovative business solutions.
- Reduce technology related risk as we design, engineer and operate Fort Bend County's Information Technology.

- Reduce technology related cost
 - Value for investments
 - Reuse before we buy when possible and when it makes sense
 - Buy before we build

Key Initiatives

The following initiatives were derived from feedback received from the governance teams and key stakeholders.

- Records/Document/File Management
 - Provide Enterprise Content management (ECM), also referred to as Document and Records management.
- Asset and Contract Management/Tracking
 - It is essential that all of our assets be properly inventoried and their location known at all times. The use of GPS is recommended.
 - Provide the capability to manage County contracts.
- Financial Analysis/Cost Allocation
 - The ability to analyze and clearly understand the cost of doing business in all departments is essential to effectively manage cost.
 - Where true cost analysis cannot be calculated, an effective means of allocating cost across departments is desired.
- Right people must have access to the right information when needed
 - Secure and simple external/internal access to appropriate information via enhanced web services.
 - Enhanced voice services to allow alternative access to needed data and to conduct business transactions.
- Business Collaboration
 - Audio conferencing service
 - Video conferencing service
 - Instant messaging service
- Mobile/Wireless Technology Strategy
 - Develop a strategy for taking on coordination of County mobile/handheld services centrally by IT.
 - Develop mobile standards to preserve the integrity of the IT infrastructure without confining/stifling the users' ability to perform their job, and obtain tools to administer and support.
- Disaster Readiness, Business Continuity
 - Enhance the County Emergency Operations Center's (EOC) ability to act as a "stand-alone" facility during times of disaster (survivability).
 - Build and ensure redundant EOC communication/data systems (redundancy).
 - Build an alternate EOC facility at Jane Long Building (redundancy).
 - Maintain and improve security of EOC communication/data systems (cyber security).
 - Build and ensure interoperability of EOC communication/data systems (flexibility).

- Maintain technology support services to maintain all EOC communication/data systems as “battle ready” on a 24/7/365 basis (zero downtime).
- Encourage development of Continuity of Operations plans for all County departments (continuity of government).

Information Technology Base Level Requirements

Base level requirements to ensure success in carrying out this strategic plan include:

- Use the CIP budget as granted by Commissioners Court to continue the infrastructure refresh programs.
- Improve basic IT service delivery.
- Provide Network Operations Center (NOC) capability equipped with remote test tools and capabilities to perform proactive management.
- Study each site to determine needs for survivability of IT services.
- Build survivability capabilities as needed throughout the County in line with Office of Emergency Management requirements.
- Introduce new innovation features and functionality to the departments and assist in embedding them into the processes.
- Develop IT Service Desk into a full function Customer Service Center that provides the level of service needed for Fort Bend County departments and offices to be successful.
- IT Innovation
 - The state-of-the-art core voice system that is being installed in Fort Bend County provides the opportunity to streamline and enhance the business workflows.
 - Maximize the functionality of enterprise applications in production. Integrate where feasible the current enterprise applications (e.g., Lawson, Tyler, Tiburon, Zoll, etc.) to better manage information, and reduce redundant data entry.

Information Technology Governance and Principles

IT governance and principles are necessary to ensure the recommended technology solutions meet or exceed the business requirements. Key governance and principle concepts include:

- Always understand the business objectives of Fort Bend County in order to enable success through the use of IT products and services.
- Maintain a current list of IT requirements and a supporting prioritized roadmap, developed through interaction with the Fort Bend County governance processes (Commissioners Court, IT Leadership Team, Public Infrastructure Steering Committee, Finance & Human Capital Steering Team and Judicial Steering Team).
- IT and the business units will strive to become full partners and work together to solve business problems and deliver innovative solutions.
- Prepare Fort Bend County for the future by building a scalable IT infrastructure and applications portfolio.
- Major IT investments or major budget deviations require business case development and/or cost justification.
- IT will work collaboratively with those business units not served directly by IT, in an effort to maintain common basic standards, ease of use and integration, enhanced system and service integrity, and minimized costs.

Financial Management/Metrics

The metrics utilized to manage the successful implementation of IT projects include:

- Investments in IT technology and services must be justified based upon benefit and value added.
- A clear cost justification for technology expenditures is essential.
- IT consumption needs to be understood to provide accurate accounting for cost of doing business.

Information Technology Services and Sourcing

The Information Technology department is the proprietor and protector of the County's technology infrastructure and is comprised of the following divisions:

Administration

- Department budget planning and oversight
- IT accounts payable
- IT technology product quotes

IT Projects

- Large project management
- Odyssey application oversight
- Support and issue resolution for Odyssey applications

Service Desk

- Single point of contact for all Fort Bend County IT related issues.
- Centralized point for all IT user communications.
- Monitors the response and follow-up for all incident tickets submitted by the business units. Designed to be a first-call resolution desk for all customer issues.

Desktop/Server Operations

- Maintains, designs, and monitors all server and network hardware within the County.
- Maintains and monitors all telecommunication devices within the County.
- Designs and implements policies in support of user accounts, file share access and data retrieval.
- Supports and maintains the data center warehousing needs for the County.
- Handles incident calls that require a higher level of support for the customers.
- Handles all repair and service needs for desktop, server, and telecommunications hardware.

Infrastructure Engineering

- Infrastructure design, selection and engineering
- Project management for infrastructure implementation projects
- Support and issue resolution for network infrastructure components

Applications Support

- Support and resolution of website, intranet site and web-based application issues.
- Development and support of the County's public website.
- Development and support of the County's employees-only intranet site.
- Selected application analysis, development and support.

Systems Support

- Support and resolution of software application issues.
- Software application analysis, development, installation and support.
- Administration of databases for supported applications.
- System administration for enterprise software applications.

Fast Facts

- 160 servers supported
- 2,400 telephones supported
- 2,200 personal computers supported
- 50+ software applications supported
- 2,630,555 external visitors access the County website per year
- 113,360 visitors access the Employee Connect website per year
- 13,485 (average) new service requests received by the IT department in one year
- 26,000 (average) phone calls received by the IT Service Desk in one year
- 3,732,050 (average) valid emails received by the County per year

*Note: The above statistics were based on calendar year 2011 totals.

Information Technology Business Architecture

Fort Bend County IT business architecture includes people, processes, information and technology, and their relationships to one another and to our external constituency. Therefore, IT must:

- Gain support throughout by creating, communicating and improving the key requirements and principles that describe the County's future state vision.
- Analyze business strategy and objectives and translate into transformational IT strategies.
- Ensure solutions address the business challenges and are supported by the users and County governance.
- Review the strategic plan annually – revalidate and make adjustments as needed.

Information Technology People Resources

The most valuable ingredient for success is our people. Without a qualified professional IT staff, none of our plans work. Over the last few years IT products and services have been provided for the most part by internal staff with augmentation from outside contract resources. The focus has been for IT to be a service organization that provides basic IT functionality as defined by users.

Moving forward, IT desires to be a partner to the elected officials and department heads across the County in understanding the business and then working together to gain approval and funding to provide innovative solutions.

Considering this desire to transition to a more business focused IT, our staff's skills need to transition. As we replace staff due to attrition, and as we train and develop our current employees, we need to focus more on IT business skills rather than strictly focusing on the traditional deep IT technology skill set.

It makes sense to attain highly skilled technology resources on a contract basis, while the in-house staff focuses on steering, planning and developing an intimate knowledge of what Fort Bend County needs.

Information Technology Business Innovation Process

Once a solid, basic IT foundation is established, technology innovation opportunities will be explored. Those opportunities include:

- Broad participation will be facilitated through the four functioning governance teams and other key departments that have strong needs for IT solutions.
- Efforts will focus upon specific quick wins which can be implemented in 3-9 months that either enhance core systems and services or provide specific standalone innovation.
- IT business analysts will be assigned to understand and facilitate analysis, qualification, building of business cases and prioritization of technology solutions.
- Approval will be sought from Commissioners Court, when needed, then added to an “innovation roadmap.”

Risks and Issues

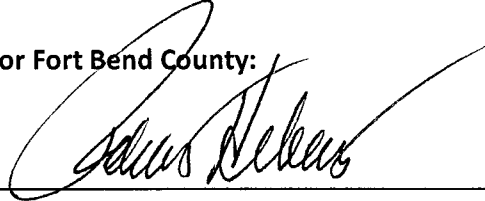
Potential risks and issues which could impact the roadmap of the technology enhancements referenced within this strategic plan include, but are not limited to:

- Insufficient engagement of the stakeholders of various County departments/offices
- Lack of leadership collaboration, commitment and ownership required to ensure the IT strategy is followed
- Inadequate funding, particularly funding availability in a timely manner
- New statutory requirements that might impact the strategic vision
- Qualified technology personnel (employee retention & recruiting)
- Security (physical, cyber and County asset)

Approval

The Fort Bend County Commissioners Court hereby approves this 2012-2016 Information Technology Strategic Plan and acknowledges that it shall become effective on the date executed.

For Fort Bend County:



Robert Hebert, County Judge

5-22-2012

Date Approved

Attest:



Dianne Wilson, County Clerk

