Annual Internal Review

This report covers the time period of 7/1/2021 to 6/30/2022

Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission (CTTC)

The Board/Commission mission statement (per the City Code) **is:**

§ 2-1-107 - COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION.

(A) The Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission membership should be broadly representative of community interests. A commissioner should have resided continuously within the City for not less than 180 days.

(B) In this section:

> (1) Information and communications technology includes digital devices, networks, and software that allow people to create, access, store, transmit, and manipulate information.
> (2) Community technology includes information, communications technology training, and access that promotes civic and cultural participation, employment, and life-long learning.
> (3) Telecommunications services include all transmission of voice, data, or video by means of permanent facilities installed in the City's rights-of-way or by means of radio transmission.

(C) The commission shall advise the city council regarding issues that include:

> (1) Community technology;
> (2) Telecommunications services;
> (3) New sources of funding for access television projects;
> (4) New sources of funding for community technology projects;

(5) Allocation of annual financial support;

(6) The evaluation of the performance of access television contractors and other community technology contractors, including development of criteria to be used for evaluations; and

(7) Information and communications technology facilities and services that are operated by the City for public use, including the City web site, Internet services and open government technologies.

(D) The commission shall conduct public hearings regarding issues that include:

 (1) The performance of access television contractors and other community technology contractors; and

(2) The identification of community cable, telecommunications, and technology needs.

(E) The commission shall promote access to telecommunications services and community technologies by methods including:

(1) Public awareness, use, and viewership of access television programming and other community media;

(2) Identifying community technology needs and problems in the City and defining innovative programming approaches to those needs and problems; and (3) Public awareness of telecommunications policy and community technology issues.

(F) The commission shall serve as a coordinating forum for issues relating to the provision of every different type of telecommunications services and community technologies, by receiving reports and recommendations from other City boards and commissions and from City departments, and forwarding these to the city council.

(G) The commission does not possess any sovereign authority regarding any cable television or cable related telecommunications issue, and the commission serves in an advisory capacity only.

(H) The Commission may create a Grant Review Committee consisting of up to seven members to review grant applications, conduct interviews, and evaluate applications for the purpose of providing recommendations to the Commission for grant awards under the City's Grant for Technology Opportunities program. The Commission may appoint persons to the Grant Review Committee who are not members of the Commission, but must appoint one member of the Commission to the Grant Review Committee who shall serve as ex-officio chair of the Grant Review Committee. All members of the Grant Review Committee are subject to Article 4 of Chapter 2-7 of the Code (*Code of Ethics*).

Source: Ord. 20071129-011; Ord. 20080618-030; Ord. 20111208-073;
Ord. No. 20141211-204, Pt. 11, 7-1-15.

1. **Describe the board's actions supporting their mission during the previous calendar year. Address all elements of the board's mission statement as provided in the relevant sections of the City Code.**

Reflecting adoption by our 2021-2022 Commissioners and the topical focus of prior standing Commissions, the following first describes the agreed-upon challenges facing the Commission in service of our mission as "CTTC Challenge Statements", before separately listing "CTTC Annual Review Actions" or the key presentations and actions taken to address them during the previous calendar year. Although representative of the Commission as a whole, the presentations before the Commission described above and the representative Commission actions are grouped by the Working Group for the purposes of this Annual Internal Review.

Previous Year Challenge Statements, Working Group Related Presentations, and Actions

Items in italics represent agenda items or representative Commission actions.

1. How might the Commission encourage and monitor the development, adoption, and deployment of small cell and other advanced/upcoming technology including possibly extending such services to areas beyond the downtown area?

2. How might the Commission work with the city and the carriers to ensure that the city and the carriers cooperate to enhance the latter's capabilities in alignment with city projects to upgrade its road infrastructure?

3. How might the Commission provide citizen oversight over and insight to smart city and open government efforts?

4. How might the Commission work with other Commissions and across all City departments to identify opportunities for collaboration?

5. How might this Commission use city technology to promote civic participation, transparency, open data, and partnering with carriers, including possibly providing city incentives to carriers to deliver equitable access to services by citizens?

6. How might this Commission advise City Council on how to improve access to technology and telecommunications services in underserved areas of Austin, particularly during times of emergency?

7. How might this commission work with the city and Cap Metro to ensure that all transportation infrastructure projects are implemented in a way that they enable / permit simultaneous upgrades to the communication infrastructure?

2021-2022 CTTC Annual Internal Review Actions

Related Agenda Items, Budget Recommendations, & Council Agenda Item Requests

June 2021
- Status Update on Digital Inclusion Projects (John Speirs, Program Manager, Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs)
- CTTC Agenda and Budget Analysis (Commission Discussion & Possible Action)

July 2021
- Briefing on Communications and Technology Management Structure and Initiatives (Chris Stewart, Chief Information Officer)
- Briefing on the Solicitation for Media Production Training and Public access Television Facilities Management (John Speirs, Program Manager, TARA)
- Briefing on Reliable and Affordable Broadband Internet for All Project from the Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs Office (John Speirs, Rondella Hawkins, and Khotan Harmon)

September 2021
- Autonomy Institute Fellow Presentation on Public Infrastructure Network Nodes (Jeff DeCoux, Autonomy Institute Fellow)
- City of Austin Strategic Outcomes Review (Commission discussion and Possible Action)
- Digital Inclusion Week 2021 Planning (Commission discussion and possible action)
- GTOPs expansion to $500K with dedicated budget for marketing communications (Nehemiah Pitts III, CTTC Chair)
- Shared Conduit, Shared Towers, and PINNs Capability Assessement (Infrastructure Working Group)

October 2021
- Commission discussion and action on its 2022 meeting schedule
  - Motion to approve the commission 2022 schedule as presented made by Chair Pitts, second by Commission Apodaca passed on a vote of 9-0.
- Digital Equity and Inclusion Town Hall
  - At the town hall, 11 community members presented their lived experience of the digital divide. Mission Capital, United Way, and the Housing Authority of the City of Austin helped facilitate this event and locate community members to present.)

December 2021
- Telecommunications and Regulatory Affairs update – Rondella Hawkins, TARA Officer, Financial Services Department

- HACA Mobile Hot Spot Speed & Connection Testing – Catherine Crago, Head of Strategic Initiatives, Housing Authority of the City of Austin & Austin Pathways, and Ashlee Johnson, ACC IT Intern
- Briefing on the Reliable and Affordable Broadband for All Project – Khotan Harmon, Leadership Austin Fellow
- Digital Inclusion Week Art Competition – Jesse Rodriguez, Interim Program Manager, Financial Services Department
  - The Digital Inclusion Week Art Competition winners were announced as follows: First Place: Zahraa Alfatle, 11 Second Place: Sowmya Kulukuru, 14 Third Place: Isabelle Call, 11)
- Digital Equity and Inclusion Town Hall – Chair Nehemiah Pitts III
  - Motion in support of the Commission holding either semi-annual or quarterly lived experience share-outs/town hall meetings made by Chair Pitts and seconded by commissioner DasGupta passed on a vote of 8-0.

January 2022

- Office of Innovation Briefing (Alba Sereno, Chief Research & Strategic Initiatives Officer, Innovation Office)
- Update on the Grant for Technology Opportunity Program Letter of Interest Process (Jesse Rodriguez, Interim Program Manager, Financial Services Department)
- Digital Equity and Inclusion Town Hall Discussion 2 – Chair Nehemiah Pitts III
- Election of Officers – Vice Chair (Motion to nominate Commissioner Apodaca made by Commissioner Yeatts and seconded by Chair Pitts passed on a vote of 8-0.)

February 2022

- Presentation on Digital Access Research (Susan Millea and Dan Brown, Children's Optimal Health)
- Presentation on Public Producer Workforce Development Programming (Rakeda Ervin and Rebecca Campbell, Austin Film Society – Austin Public)
- Selection of the 2022 GTOPs Core Review Panel (Motion to appoint the panel as recommended made by Chair Pitts, seconded by Commissioner DasGupta, passed on a vote of 8-0.)
- Commission Discussion on FY 2023 Budget Priorities
- Commission Discussion on Library Commission collaboration
- Commission Discussion on Texas Broadband Office. GAATN, PINNs, Shared Conduit/Infrastructure, and Resiliency Hubs

March 2022

- FY 2021 Residential Technology Study: Qualitative Analysis of the Digital Divide in Austin by MEASURE Austin (Paulette Blanc, Meme Styles, and Reyda Taylor)
- Update from Communications and Technology Management Department (Chris Stewart, Chief Information Officer)
- Austin Free-Net: Update on Digital Literacy Training, Digital Navigation, Device Donation, and Future Planning (Jess Ross, Executive Director of Austin Free-Net)
- Commission Discussion on FY 2023 Budget Priorities
  - (Commission discussion and possible action) Motion to recommend $100,000 in additional funding for Austin Free-Net made by Commissioner Dasgupta, seconded by Chair Pitts, passed on a vote of 7-0.
  - Motion to recommend $450,000 to support the Austin Film Society's Producer Workforce development program made by Commissioner Apodaca, seconded by Commissioner DasGupta, passed on a vote of 7-0.
  - Motion to recommend funding for two interns at $15 and $20 dollars per hour to support the Community Technology unit of Financial Services Department made by Chair Pitts, seconded by Commissioner Eiland passed on a vote of 7-0.

April 2022

- Briefing from the Housing and Planning Department on the FY 22-23 Action Plan and Community Needs Assessment (Max Horstman, Mandy DeMayo)
- Economic Development Department on COVID programs and current programs (Sylnovia Holt-Rabb, David Gray, and Susana Carbajal)
- Digital Inclusion Town Hall Action – Chair Nehemiah Pitts III
  - Motion to allow commissioners to participate in the Town Hall Meetings as long as quorum is not met at the meeting made by Chair Pitts, seconded by Commissioner Ramos, passed on a vote of 6-0.
- 2022 Grant for Technology Opportunities Program Award Recommendations – Jesse Rodriguez, Interim Program Manager, Financial Services Department
  - Motion to approve the award recommendations as presented made by Commissioner Gairo and seconded by Commissioner Ramos passed on a vote of 6-0.

May 2022

- Commission annual work plan retreat to plan priorities for the next year of commission activity – Led by Chair Nehemiah Pitts III

- ○ Motion to make the discussed changes to the Working Groups made by Chair Pitts, seconded by Commissioner Thompson, passed on a vote of 7-0.
  - ○ Motion to approve the Work Plan as discussed made by Chair Pitts, seconded by Commissioner DasGupta passed on a vote of 7-0.
- Commission invitation to Jason JonMichael with Austin Transportation Department to join Working Group discussion regarding Intelligent Infrastructure and PINNs

June 2022

- United Way presentation on ConnectATX (Anabella Tarango, Francisco Gallegos)
- Commission Discussion on FCC Broadband Standards amd creating an Austin Broadband Standard (Discussion and Action)
- Commission Discussion on the Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan Refresh and Resolution formalizing City Manager Support (Discussion and Action)
- Commission Discussion on an Intelligent Infrastructure Resolution (Discussion and Action)

Boards & Commissions Council Committee Agenda Item Requests

2021
- **Council Committee Agenda Request** - 20210512-2a: on Council Vote Tabulation (317KB)

Budget Recommendations

2022
- **Recommendation** - Recommendation 20220309-3a1: Increasing City Support of Digital Literacy Training with Austin Free-Net (141KB)

- **Recommendation** - Recommendation 20220309-3a2: Producer Workforce Development (142KB)

- **Recommendation** - Recommendation 20220309-3a3: Community Technology Interns (121KB)

2. **Determine if the board's actions throughout the year comply with the mission statement.**

The Commission's actions fully comply with the mission statement.

3. **List the board's goals and objectives for the new calendar year.**

Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission 2021- 2022 Work Plan (Goals & Objectives)

This Work Plan sets out the areas of focus and corresponding Working Groups (WG) for the Commission. Each area of focus has a working group and identified topics to discuss, as agreed upon during prior Commission meetings and working group meetings. Once formally adopted by Chair submission to the City Clerk, the implementation and actions can be amended over the year based on the majority approval.

Digital Inclusion, Civic Engagement, & Strategic Policy Impact Working Group

Membership
- **Chair:** Nehemiah Pitts, III
- Nicole Thompson-Beavers
- Steven Apodaca
- Maxine Eiland
- Sophie Gairo
-

Strategic Outcomes:
Economic Opportunity & Affordability
Safety
Mobility
Health & Environment
Culture & Lifelong Learning
Government That Works For All

Objectives (Order does not reflect prioritization): (All Strategic Outcomes Reflected)

1. Investigate ways to enable the homeless population using a digital matching program i.e. job matching, programs etc.

   a. Historical: Small conversations about the role played by local nonprofits and DECA partner solutions without much follow-up. Digital Kiosks were discussed as something to pursue. Must leverage key learnings from existing use cases (e.g. convention center, cap metro, airport, City Hall, etc…)

   b. Next: Schedule either WG or Commission Meeting discussion with Austin's Homeless Strategy Officer.

2. Increase CTTC relationships/partnerships with local technology companies (AT&T, Google, etc.) with the goal of identifying opportunities to expand both access and upskilling/education including the development of broadband standards for minimum acceptable speeds in households, particularly for communities of color.

   a. Historical: We have open communication lines with a history of more frequent presentations from Carriers on changes impacting the community, such as the Affordability Programs.

   b. Next: Engage with all local carriers, including discussion on broadband standards and upskilling/workforce development programs. Chair Pitts has meeting scheduled with Google Government Affairs contact, Jon-Michael Cortez

3. Remote participation at Boards and Commission meetings

   a. Historical: After several years of pushing this forward from the initial concept and pilot to the Governor's emergency declaration/services use during the pandemic, Remote participation at Boards and Commission meetings to allow for Hybrid meetings is now the standard.

   b. Next: Promote this success as an example of effective government aligned to all of the strategic objectives and advocate for improvement and expansion where appropriate.

4. Advocate for Zoom licenses administered by libraries for civic groups

   a. Historical: Budget Recommendation

   b. Next: Follow-Up on status

5. Continue to advocate for increased funding for library wireless hub and platform lending programs

   a. Historical: Budget Recommendation

     b. Next: Renew Budget Recommendation. Increase advocacy with local partners and collaboration funding sources

6. **GTOPs**

     a. Continue to advocate for increased funding for GTOPS

          i.   Historical: Standing Budget Recommendation and review process.

          ii.   Next: Renew Budget Recommendation

     b. GTOPs Expansion - Community Needs assessment and/or resource mapping

          i.   Historical: Discussion of aggregating digital inclusion data points (e.g. unmet needs, resiliency challenges, institutional obstacles, etc…) and digital inclusion resources (GTOPS recipients, access providers, nonprofits, integrators, etc..) to help us expand the funding capabilities and better award funds based on an active data-driven community need analysis

          ii.   Next: engage Open Austin to create a resource

7. Emergency Broadband Relief Carrier Evaluation

     a. Historical: Commission requested engagement from TARA office and CTD. A variety of responses were provided. Recent legislation has likely increased the amount of responses and need to confirm who is participating.

     b. Next: Provide a community report on all providers who responded and those who didn't. Need a to consider creating a provider map that highlights what carriers are available for what neighborhoods to enable competition and consumer advocacy.

8. State Legislative Tech & Telecommunications Policy Evaluation

     a. Historical: Ongoing discussions about the impact of Federal, State, and County policy and actions on City of Austin decision making. Regular briefings from Rondella Hawkins, Officer, TARA and CTD, staff.

     b. Next: An updated briefing.

9. ATD Smart Mobility & Project Connect (see IAS above)

     a. Historical: Open communication with ATD and IAS teams, which have evolved over time as the departments have changed.

    b. Next: Schedule Jason Jon-Michael and relevant Cap Metro contacts for a WG discussion

10. Collaboration, Civic Engagement & Lived Experience Sharing w/Tech

    a. Special Called Meetings (Wide-Scale DI Ecosystem reflective)

        i. Historical:

        ii. Next: Send thanks to participants and manage follow ups.

    b. Citizen Participation & Video Conferencing from Public Facilities

        i. Historical: Town Hall Listening Session

        ii. Next: Send thank yous to participants. Manage follow-ups with specific clients. Schedule next Listening Session with prospective July 4th weekend offered as an option. Start planning for DIW 2022 event with Travis County Expo and County partners.

11. D.E.C.A. Expansion

    a. Funding Source Identification

    b. Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)

Knowledge, Information, and Data Stewardship Working Group

Members
- **Chair:** Steven Apodaca
- Dave Floyd
- Nehemiah Pitts, III
- Maxine Eiland

Strategic Outcomes:
Economic Opportunity & Affordability
Safety
Mobility

Health & Environment
Culture & Lifelong Learning
Government That Works For All

Objectives (Order does not reflect prioritization):

1. To help COA communicate city programs, resources etc. to underserved areas and communities without access to the internet. To help citizens engage COA using technology. (Government That Works For All, Health & Environment, Safety, Economic Opportunity & Affordability, Culture and Lifelong Learning)

   a. **Next Steps: Reach out to Austin Free-Net and 311 to scope their ability to share resources.**

2. Data Mapping & Analysis (Government That Works For All, Health & Environment, Safety, Economic Opportunity & Affordability, Mobility, Culture & Lifelong Learning)

   a. Equitable Broadband Geographical Data Report & Analysis

   b. Collaboration between COA and UT to create SpeadUpAmerica bandwidth map

   c. GTOPs

3. Monitor COA webpage redesign project (Government That Works For All, Health & Environment, Safety, Economic Opportunity & Affordability, Mobility, Culture & Lifelong Learning)

   a. ***Next Action:*** *WG update from CTM contact Divya Rathanlal and Commission presentation from Chris Stewart (CIO) in September*

4. Council vote database (Government That Works For All)

   a. ***Next Action:*** *Awaiting action from CoA and will respond as necessary*

5. Residential Technology Study (Government That Works For All, Health & Environment, Safety, Economic Opportunity & Affordability, Mobility, Culture & Lifelong Learning)

   a. ***Next Action:*** *Continue to follow-up with Travis County*

6. UT-COA & CTTC ILA Research Collaboration (Government That Works For All, Health & Environment, Safety, Economic Opportunity & Affordability, Mobility, Culture & Lifelong Learning) -- follow up

   a. ***Next Action:*** *Receive update from Alba Sereno (Chief Research & Strategic Initiatives Officer) on progress*

7. City-Wide Technology Pilot Audit & Assessment (Government That Works For All, Health & Environment, Safety, Economic Opportunity & Affordability, Mobility)

   a. Software Applications

      i. **_Next Action:_** *Follow-up with C. Stewart (Chair N. Pitts III)*

   b. Atlas One APD App - follow up

      i. **_Next Action:_** *Follow-up with APD PIO (Jesse) and engage with bodycam research contacts (Chair N. Pitts II)*

   c. Community First 3D-Printing Homelessness Solutions

      i. **_Next Actions:_**

         1. *Check on status and invite to present at a future commission meeting (D. Floyd)*

         2. *Connect with Dianna Grey (Homeless Strategy Officer) (Jesse)*

   d. Autonomous Vehicles, Drones, & Smart City Tech

      i. **_Next Action:_** *Follow up with Jason John Michael (N. Pitts)*

   a. Investigate issues of data and privacy, especially as they relate to drones.

      i. **_Next Action:_** *Review the policy report*

Technology, Infrastructure, and Innovation Working Group

Members
- **Chair:** Dave Floyd
- Sumit DasGupta
- Malcolm Yeatts
- Nehemiah Pitts, III

Strategic Outcomes:
Economic Opportunity & Affordability
Safety
Mobility
Health & Environment
Culture & Lifelong Learning
Government That Works For All

Objectives (Order does not reflect prioritization):

1. Provide partnerships with other organizations or high-tech companies moving into Austin to enable city-wide free wifi hotspots, charging stations (for telecom devices as well as electric cars), public devices to use etc.

   a. ***Next Action:*** *Connect with Austin Energy on their charging station program.*

   b. ***Next Action:*** *Explore what folks in the City coordinate conversations relating to federal grant funding and Austin's effort to secure those funds.*

2. Continue to monitor Google Fiber and other internet plan deployment in Austin

3. **GAATN**

   a. Advocate for the use of the GAATN network to expand community access to the Internet through City owned facilities

   b. Review plans for technology upgrades to the GAATN network

   c. Provide citizen oversight on upgrades of city fiber technology

4. Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) Efficiency & Equity Analysis & Assessment

   a. Infrastructure for Advance Services (IAS) Program Team, Camp Mabry, Austin Emergency Services, Austin Energy, etc...

   b. Removal of infrastructure barriers to digital connectivity

5. Encourage the City and Carriers to coordinate so that carrier infrastructure updates and expansions coincide with City corridor and mobility projects as well as Project Connect. Rollout of upgrades by carriers to interconnect technology, particularly in areas where the city is upgrading its roads infrastructure

6. Encourage 5G and small cell deployment beyond the downtown area including adoption of the Intelligent Infrastructure (Jeff DeCoux, Autonomy Institute)

7. Monitor Smart Cities progress and review of 2022-2023 initiatives

8. ATD smart mobility effort and alignment with CapMetro plans and means to align enhancements to communications infrastructure

9. Promote economies of scale via evaluating the ecosystem of technology units in the city and recommending consolidation as appropriate.

10. Removal of barriers to access to broadband / wireless connectivity in marginally-served (low income) areas of the city

Overall Commission

1. How might the Commission best support the City of Austin, Travis County, and the the area designated by the Texas Broadband Development as the Capital Area in pursuit of the generational funding opportunities represented by IIJA, DEAP, BEAD, and other funding sources focused on Telecommunication Infrastructure developmen and Digital Inclusion?

2. How night the Commission best support the assessment of the current Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan and "future-proofing" of the Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan refresh to ensure the persistent closing of the "Digital Divide" in the Austin-area?

3. How might the Commission encourage and monitor the development, adoption, and deployment of small cell and other advanced/upcoming technology including possibly extending such services to areas beyond the downtown area?

4. How might the Commission work with the city and the carriers to ensure that the city and the carriers cooperate to enhance the latter's capabilities in alignment with city projects to upgrade its road infrastructure?

5. How might the Commission provide citizen oversight over and insight into smart city and open government efforts?

6. How might the Commission work with other Commissions and across all City departments to identify opportunities for collaboration?

7. How might this Commission use city technology to promote civic participation, transparency, open data, and partnering with carriers, including possibly providing city incentives to carriers to deliver equitable access to services by the public?

8. How might this Commission advise City Council on how to improve access to technology and telecommunications services in underserved areas of Austin, particularly during times of emergency?

9. How might this commission work with the city and Cap Metro to ensure that all transportation infrastructure projects are implemented in a way that enables or permits simultaneous upgrades to the communication infrastructure?