

Annual Internal Review

This report covers the time period of 7/1/2023 to 6/30/2024

Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission (CTTC)

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.

(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 website, 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.

(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).

Activities and Engagement:

AI Advisory Committee Representation for the City of Austin:

Current Chair and previous Chair providing representation on the AI Advisory Committee to provide insights and guidance on artificial intelligence initiatives.

GTOP Panel ex-officio Chair:

Serving as the ex-officio Chair for the Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOP) Panel, overseeing funding decisions for awards.

Veterans Focused Listening Session Leads:

Chair and Vice Chair provided representation during a listening session focused on understanding and addressing the digital needs of veterans.

University Hills Branch Library Listening Session:

Conducting a listening session at University Hills Branch Library to gather community feedback on digital services.

All Together for Digital Inclusion Summit (December)

Organizing and leading the December summit aimed at promoting digital inclusion for all communities.

Texas Digital Opportunity Plan Response (DECA Response)

Supported the response to the Texas Digital Opportunity Plan with a comprehensive analysis and recommendations from DECA.

Digital Inclusion Week Launch Reception

Supported the launch reception to kick off Digital Inclusion Week with various stakeholders and community members.

Digital Inclusion Week Tech For all Fest

Planning, volunteering, and attending for the Tech For All Fest during Digital Inclusion Week to promote equitable access to technology.

Capitol Region: Texas Broadband Development Office Listening session

Participating in sessions focused on broadband and digital equity across the Capitol Region and 10 Central Texas counties.

Digital Equity Needs Assessment

Supported the developed [needs assessment](#) to evaluate digital equity needs for Travis County and the City of Austin.

Community Circle Meetings collaboration with Travis County

Leading community circle meetings with Travis County residents to discuss and address digital inclusion and equity concerns.

Briefings:

November 2023

- Call for commission input on Grant for Technology Opportunities Program Updates Action Plan for FY24

December 2023

- Presentation on the Enhanced Austin Public Library Card (Laura Tadena – Austin Public Library)

January 2024:

- Update on the Creative Careers Program (Rakeda Ervin – Program Director, Austin Film Society)
- Presentation on Autonomous Vehicles (Rachel Castignoli – Business Process Consultant Senior, Transportation and Public Works)

March 2024

- TARA Office briefing on the Request for Proposals for Community Technology Access Lab Management Services

May 2024

- Presentation of the selected applications for the Grant for Technology Opportunities Program

June 2024

- “New Goodwill T.E.C.H. program initiative for community device distribution”
Presentation by Goodwill Central Texas
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Council Committee Agenda Item Requests:

N/A

Commission Recommendations:

FY25 Recommendation for financial support for Telecommunications and Regulatory Affairs (TARA) Division programming and digital inclusion efforts

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.

Digital Inclusion, Civic Engagement, and Strategic Policy Impact

A. GTOPs

- a. Continue to advocate for increased funding for GTOPS
- b. Explore new areas of focus for the GTOPS award pathways

B. State Legislative Tech & Telecommunications Policy Advocacy

- a. Continue to identify areas of support at the policy level in support of the Broadband Development Office
- b. Identify programs that could potentially fill the gap of ACP sunsetting
Due to a lack of additional funding from Congress, April was the last fully funded month of the ACP before it expired. Effective June 1, households will no longer receive an ACP discount. Some internet service providers have elected to honor the ACP subscription rate to their subscribers through the end of 2024

Request a briefing from AT&T, Google, Spectrum on whether they will elect to honor the ACP subscription rate

- C. D.E.C.A. Expansion
 - a. Continue support of making DECA more specific and goal-oriented, perhaps that targets 2028 as an opportunity to show what we've done in 100 years since the 1928 strategic plan which set the stage for the digital divide
- D. Community Listening Sessions
 - a. Support community listening sessions as and when needed to address topics relevant to the commission.

Technology, Infrastructure, and Innovation

A. Public Health:

- a. What are the lessons learned by Austin Public Health (APH) from the COVID experience?
- b. What is APH doing to become more "intelligent" in tackling future health crises based on the above lessons?
- c. How can the CoA TC help here?

B. Austin Energy Smart Metering, etc.

- a. What are the lessons learned from the last 2 weather-induced power breakdowns?
- b. What actions have been taken to prevent such events in the future?
- c. What is Austin Energy (AE) doing to become more "intelligent" in delivering reliable services, including improved and smarter metering, given that climate change will likely create more situations like the last 2 power breakdowns?
- d. How could greater use of roof-installed solar panels with battery back-up help here and what improved strategy, such as greater financial incentives, does the city or AE need to implement to promote this?
- e. How can the CoA TC help here?

C. Austin Water Smart Metering, etc.

- a. Beyond smart meters, what is Austin Water (AW) doing to become more "intelligent" in delivering clean potable water even as our population continues to rise and the water level in Lake Travis continues to drop?
- b. What strategies does AW plan to implement to provide customers with greater control of water usage as well as remote access to water meters to control water flow in case of situations like water leaks?
- c. What strategies, including financial incentives, does AW plan to implement to promote greater use of greywater?
- d. How can CoA TC help here?

D. Artificial Intelligence

- a. Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications will require the collection and creation of lots of personal data. So, what are the rules that will govern how the data will be collected, stored and secured?
- b. Given it is a learning system, will every data type, collected or generated, be considered permanent? Or will there be a sunset clause in some or all of the data?
- c. What kind of protocols have been or will be put in place for a person to review one's personal data that AI apps have access to, including data that is derived from one's personal data?
- d. How can the CoA TC help here?

Knowledge, Information, and Data Stewardship

- A. Support City of Austin to communicate city programs, resources etc. to underserved areas and communities**
 - a. Provide further input to the Digital Resource List for TARA to consider
 - b. Identify organizations to share resource list with that could easily leverage the information.

- B. Monitor COA website Updates**
 - a. Continue to monitor CoA website for changes and invite website development staff to provide periodic updates

- C. City-Wide Technology Pilot Audit & Assessment**
 - a. Continue to invite Technology office back to present at the working group and commission level on progress

- D. Autonomous Vehicles, Drones, & Smart City Tech**
 - a. Review and provide additional recommendations around city ordinances regarding the testing of autonomous vehicles in the Austin City Limits
 - b. Review and provide additional recommendations if appropriate relating to the metrics that determine sufficiency of testing of autonomous vehicles in the city of Austin limits. Included in this should be a determination whether the metrics should be connected to the type of roads that are driven on i.e., highways versus main city roads e.g., and downtown versus roads in residential neighborhoods.