

# 2022 – 2025 IT STRATEGIC PLAN

Department of Information  
Technology Services

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# Message from the CIO

Gwinnett County is nationally recognized, dynamic, and diverse. We are a value-driven organization that proudly supports our vibrantly connected community by delivering superior services to nearly a million residents. In the Department of Information Technology Services, we use the County's core values as a compass to guide our decisions. We believe in empowering our business units and the residents of our community through technology. Our department is at the center of driving innovation and leveraging new technologies to support employees and serve the community.

ITS provides enterprise IT services for the County. As Gwinnett continues to thrive, the list of services provided by the County to our residents increases. Being the Chief Information Officer for the County provides an opportunity for me to lead our teams to provide an unparalleled level of service to Gwinnett County departments and residents. Our department is made up of talented people who are up to the task of serving our customers with an outstanding level of service and with the goal of presenting IT services with transparency and ease of use in mind.

ITS is comprised of six teams that provide technical services and support: Enterprise Applications and Development, Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation, Infrastructure and Operations, Cybersecurity, Fiscal and Administration, and Business Strategic Services. Services range from cybersecurity and compliance, geospatial systems, and public safety applications to communication platforms and shared enterprise applications that are used by all business units and employees. All the teams have a professional approach to providing our customers with innovative solutions — all while keeping customer service at the forefront of what we do.

ITS approaches all solutions by evaluating the customer's short- and long-term goals and then seeks to find the most optimal solution. Our portfolio contains a hybrid approach with both cloud and on-premises solutions. This hybrid model allows us to offer solutions that are quickly and easily deployed and keep costs in mind.

Our goal is to provide outstanding customer service with a level of responsiveness that keeps our customers working efficiently. Overall, our customers are satisfied knowing we can be trusted to deliver on their present and future needs.



Dorothy Parks  
CIO & Director  
Department of Information Technology Services

# Executive Summary

Businesses and municipalities have quickly realized that technology keeps their operations flowing and their employees connected. Technology is moving at a rapid pace and transforming the world around us. With continued global uncertainties, IT concerns about security, data management, digital transformation, emerging technologies, staffing, and budgeting will lead to a greater focus on building a robust IT strategy with the agility and durability to withstand change.

As we move forward, ITS will continue to search for ways to improve our organization's IT infrastructure, making it more resilient to security threats and better equipped to deal with the demands of a remote workforce and mobile community. To provide high quality services to Gwinnett County departments and residents, it is critical to create an Information Technology Strategic Plan that steers the ITS Department in the right direction, demonstrates an effective plan of action, and supports the achievement of County goals. This strategic plan is intended to serve as a guiding framework for IT in this fast, dynamic, and ambiguous environment as the department works to achieve its goals, and, in turn, support the County's goals.

# Introduction

The IT Strategic Plan identifies strategies and goals intended to guide the adoption of technologies pertaining to the business operations and processes at Gwinnett County.

This plan is designed to serve three purposes:

1. Communicate the department's strategic goals to IT professionals and offer IT providers a guidepost for deploying technology services that support the County's goals
2. Provide flexibility for IT teams to develop their team's plan while aligning with the CIO's strategic vision and technical direction
3. Offer strategies that recognize the challenges of supporting today's technology environment

Overall, this plan offers teams the flexibility in deploying technology that supports their unique missions while leveraging centrally provided services.

Given circumstances and resources at any point in time, the department has the option of determining how best to achieve those goals. For example, while encouraging open-source adoption, the plan does not specify specific applications. Rather, its intention is to provide a framework and involve County businesses in the selection of specific implementation items.

Thus, IT governance and this plan are intertwined. The identification of specific solutions, strategies, and goals identified in the IT Strategic Plan are vetted through the Standards Committee and IT governance. The Project Management Office is responsible for the implementation of projects that are approved through this process.

This plan covers the period from 2022 to 2025. Amid rapid technological change, three years represents a vast span of time. Therefore, this IT Strategic Plan is intended to be both a living document and a rolling plan, revisited and revised by ITS on an annual or frequent basis. With each subsequent version, it will become broader and more inclusive in identifying future mission critical differentiators and initiatives.

# Vision, Mission, and Values

The mission of the ITS Department is to provide a secure, reliable, and high-speed technological infrastructure; an efficient and effective operations environment; integrated information management solutions, and other high-quality, timely services and support to Gwinnett County.

ITS' vision is to be a leader among its peers in supporting a connected, modern environment while adhering to and advancing the County's vision, mission, and values.

## Gwinnett County

### Vision

Gwinnett is the preferred community where everyone thrives!

### Mission

Gwinnett proudly supports our vibrantly connected community by delivering superior services.

### Values

1. Integrity
2. Accountability
3. Equity
4. Inclusivity
5. Innovation

## Information Technology Services

### Vision

To build a better county through technology solutions.

### Mission

To deliver an integrated, responsive, and secure technology environment that advances and supports exceptional services, support, innovation, and resident care.

### Values

1. Being Passionate and Determined
2. Embracing and Driving Change
3. Delivering Innovation
4. Providing Solutions to Enable Efficiency
5. Engaging in Collaboration and Teamwork
6. Embracing Continuous Improvement
7. Always Performing with Excellence

# IT Strategic Pillars and Goals

## STRATEGIC PILLARS



## STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Strategic Approach
2. High Availability
3. Cloud Technology
4. Customer Service
5. Dynamic Infrastructure
6. Emerging Technology
7. Automation & Optimization
8. Secure & Reliable Information
9. Professional Development
10. Partner for Success

### Goal 1: Strategic Approach

*Take a strategic approach to IT planning and operations by adopting IT industry standards and approaches that align with the County's strategies and goals*

Strategic planning is our department's process of defining our strategic direction and making decisions about how we will allocate our resources to pursue this direction. The purpose of our strategic planning is to help our department establish priorities to better meet IT's and the County's mission.

Strategic IT planning is an integral part of our planning and enterprise governance. The planning encompasses the County's leadership, organizational structures, and processes. This planning helps ensure that our department achieves its strategic goals and objectives. The County's technology environment must also be aligned with its long-term strategic plan, goals, and objectives. The County's management and board must recognize the critical role of technology in laying the foundation for and enabling its strategic direction and operational goals.

## **Goal 2: High Availability**

*Provide high availability of data and voice networks through a robust and reliable network and server infrastructure that follows industry standards and architecture, as well as server and storage infrastructure and services with redundancy, failover, and load balancing for all mission critical applications*

While it is impossible to completely rule out the possibility of system downtime, the IT teams will implement strategies to minimize the risk of business interruptions due to system unavailability. One of the most efficient ways to manage the risk of downtime is high availability, which facilitates maximum potential uptime. High availability is of great significance for mission-critical systems, where a service disruption may lead to adverse business impact, resulting in additional expenses or financial losses.

Although high availability does not eliminate the threat of service disruption, it ensures that the IT teams have taken all the necessary steps to ensure business continuity. High availability also reduces single point of failure. Everything from load balancer, firewall and router, to reverse proxy and monitoring systems are redundant at both the networks and application levels, guaranteeing the highest level of service availability.

## **Goal 3: Cloud Technology**

*Move applications to vendor hosted and/or cloud-based servers and storage when possible and focus IT personnel work on data and application integration*

To reduce high expenditures of hardware, software, and IT maintenance, ITS will systematically evaluate the feasibility of moving existing services and obtaining new services in the cloud. This will also include consideration for moving the data center to the cloud.

## **Goal 4: Customer Service**

*Improve customer service and be known as a trusted partner that is proactive and responsive in aligning IT resources with the needs of the business units*

Implementing a proactive approach often requires a strong customer experience strategy, as well as investment in new technologies. By adopting a proactive customer service approach, we will be able to anticipate and resolve the customer's problems in the preliminary stage itself. This puts less pressure on the support team and increases customer loyalty. Taking this effort shows that we are proactive and understand our customer's issues even before they become problems. It also means our teams need to be prompt in identifying, resolving customer issues, and ensuring great experiences.

Faster response is a key ingredient of superior customer service as customers want our teams to focus on taking care of their needs quickly. They also expect us to show a



willingness to help even before an issue occurs. A proactive customer service approach provides ample opportunities to meet customer expectations and strengthen client relationships. It helps our teams boost the value of our customers and deliver an excellent experience.

### **Goal 5: Dynamic Infrastructure**

*Maintain a secure, reliable, and dynamic information technology infrastructure*

Alongside ensuring technology landscapes remain secure, ITS has the added dimension of information and cybersecurity. Embedding mature processes and governance frameworks are more important now than ever before. The frequency, sophistication, and severity of cyberattacks, malware exploits, and espionage are dramatically increasing and showing no sign of slowing down. Unfortunately, no one is immune, and municipalities are also being targeted. The County must provide the resources to ensure that its network is secure and follows federal and state regulations, thereby create a culture of security. ITS will:

- Build a culture of security by training all of its employees and creating incident response teams and procedures for handling data breaches
- Deploy software solutions to track, secure, and enforce policies on County-owned devices and on personal devices owned by employees that are used to access sensitive information
- Continue to enhance its IT security infrastructure and implement strategies to target specific types of attacks

### **Goal 6: Emerging Technology**

*Evaluate and implement emerging technologies to solve problems, enhance processes and services, and assist with defining the direction for the Gwinnett governmental community*

As most IT organizations, we are constantly addressing new and developing business challenges. Where there is a need to introduce new technology, making the right decision can be difficult. Many emerging technologies take advantage of the latest advancements in artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), and the internet of things (IoT).

As businesses compete to stay ahead of the evolutionary curve, it has become almost mandatory to adopt the latest innovations. It is important that we look beyond the latest trends. We must develop a mindset that enables us to identify a problem that is looking for an answer and not a new technology initiative that is looking for a problem. Any decision to pursue a new technology must be based on business strategy, budget,

and future growth. Any solution we implement should be fit-for-purpose now and for years ahead.

### **Goal 7: Automation and Optimization**

*Facilitate the use of technology throughout the County*

Improve service delivery to all business units and residents through automation and enhanced technology processes. Through the newly created Standards Review Committee, any new technology will be reviewed to ensure that they are compatible with the standards established within ITS. The Standards Review Committee is made up of multiple customer departments outside of ITS.

As a simplistic example, the Committee will make sure that:

- A new application purchase is compatible with the latest version of Windows
- It will not introduce an unacceptable level of security risk to the County's environment
- We evaluate how it may impact the County's technology strategy

### **Goal 8: Secure and Reliable Information**

*Provide and maintain secure and reliable information technologies to meet the County's changing needs*

Like any organization, Gwinnett is challenged to keep up with increasingly sophisticated and disruptive cyberattacks. Attacks on network platforms and the numerous ransomware attacks are only expected to increase and place more pressure on organizations to continuously strive to improve their security posture.

To reduce risk and limit the effect of successful attacks, our Security team will be developing a Zero Trust strategy — a set of guidelines to help create a more secure network architecture. This change in strategy — as recommended by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency — will no longer treat devices as trusted simply due to their presence on the County network. While no organization can prevent every attack, the Security team will continue to move forward in its efforts to improve cyber hygiene, a term used to describe core security controls which are high impact but also high effort.

### **Goal 9: Professional Development**

*Provide professional development and training in the use of technology to increase the productivity, efficiency, and communication expertise of staff*

The County will continue to invest in the training of its IT personnel who support and secure crucial IT systems that are core to the County's business. Learning should be a lifelong pursuit of everyone involved in supporting the County's mission. Because the field of technology is complex and constantly changing, ongoing training and development of the IT workforce is essential. The rapid evolution of technologies, the ability to drive data-led decisions, and the need to keep information secure and within governance requires us to upskill our IT teams and hire new talent.

The investment in existing culture and people is paramount to the ITS Department to ensure innovation is being driven forward while still maintaining existing systems and solutions. Without the right talent, training investment, and acquisition of new skills, IT faces a negative impact on key strategic initiatives. As technology continues to develop rapidly, we will continue to focus on hiring skilled technical roles to advance the County's technology footprint.

### **Goal 10: Partner for Success**

Collaboration between departments is more than simply cooperating with other teams. It involves a shared vision, mutual respect, and an in-depth understanding of each other's role in a project with the goal of achieving excellent business outcomes and outstanding customer experience. Seamless and effective collaboration between departments requires effort and sometimes changes. As IT professionals, we have the ability to encourage collaboration between departments from the ground level by structuring our team's interactions with other departments. The work involved in making those changes can produce transformative results, thus ITS will:

- **Provide Context**  
ITS will give our teams a holistic view of the projects and common goals to encourage information sharing framed around shared objectives. When teams are guided by a common vision and understand how their work fits into the larger context, they are more empowered to take initiative.
- **Cultivate Empathy**  
ITS will encourage teams to "walk a day in the other's shoes" to see the challenges and understand the constraints of other teams and departments from a different perspective. Having a mutual understanding between departments can make collaboration smoother and more effective.
- **Develop a Common Language**  
ITS will encourage team members to learn the basic terms used by other departments so they can effectively communicate on a day-to-day basis.

- **Facilitate Consistent Communication**

ITS will encourage information sharing and help team members stay on top of items they need to review and comment on. The increasingly fast pace of the workplace environment means everyone involved in a project needs to have the most up-to-date information at all times.

- **Set the Tone**

ITS will create a culture of collaboration within the leadership team by establishing healthy relationships between department heads. This will foster a sense of collective responsibility for the organization's success and build a sense of trust between departments that will become invaluable for seamless collaboration.

- **Celebrate Wins**

ITS will celebrate wins and acknowledge each other's roles in the success of milestones or projects to help cultivate trust and respect among team members from different departments.

- **Encourage Feedback**

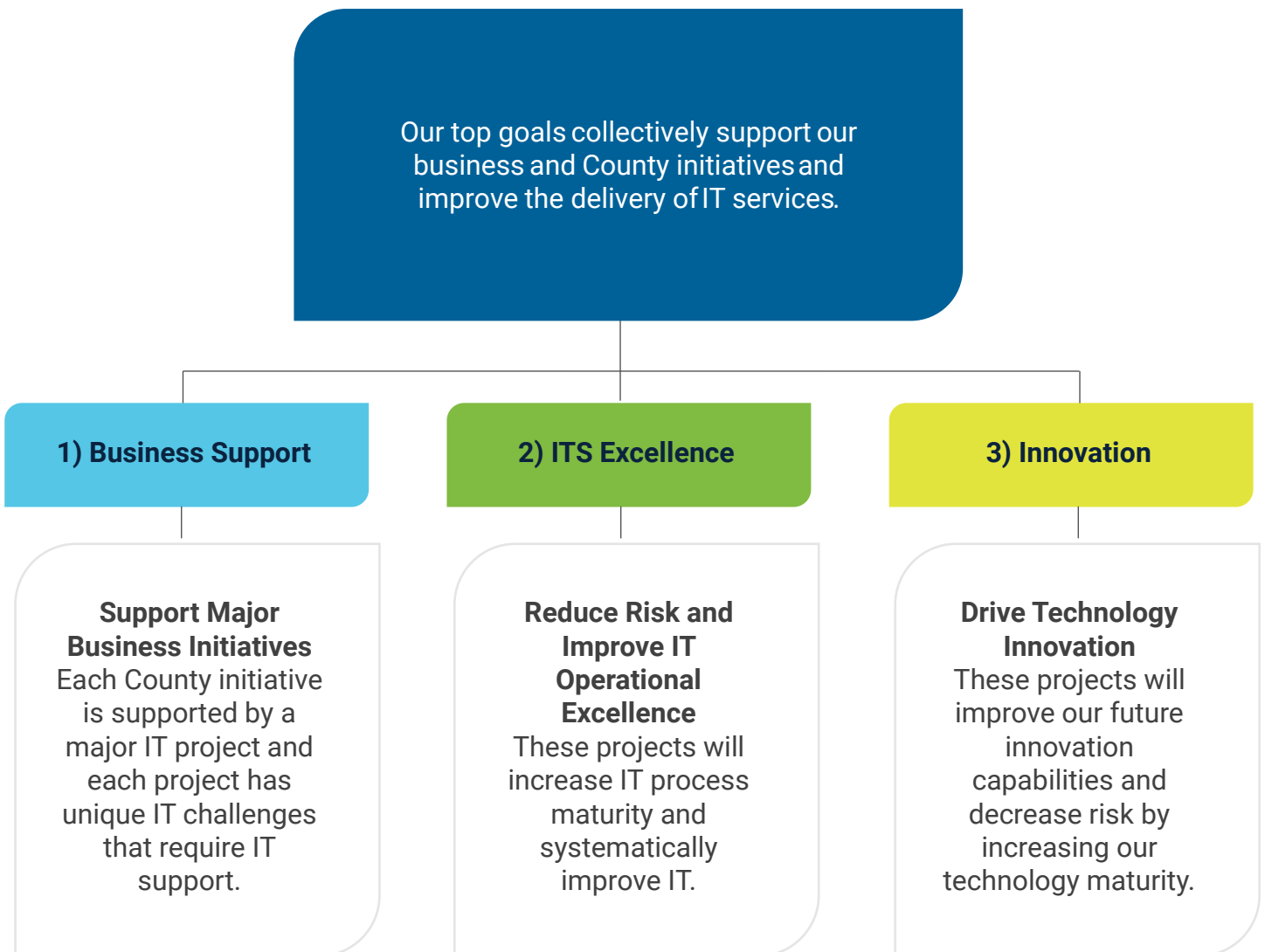
ITS will encourage feedback and help empower team members, thus contributing to streamlining and improving processes and collaboration between departments.

- **Foster Trust**

ITS will encourage trust and transparency between teams and among individuals. This includes trust of integrity, trust of ethics, and trust of competency.

# Key Goals

IT's key goals can be categorized three ways:



## Conclusion

We are committed to building a better county through technology solutions and delivering an integrated, responsive, and secure technology environment that advances and supports exceptional services, support, innovation, and resident care.