

# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT INFORMATION SERVICES

January 2026



**METROPOLITAN**  
COUNCIL



# Insights from the CIO

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Insights from the CIO

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As we reflect on 2025, I want to thank Council leadership and staff for your support and patience during a year of unprecedented demand and complexity. Information Services faced significant challenges, but together we made remarkable progress in strengthening the Council’s technology foundation and improving the experience for employees and customers.

Our focus this year has been on building a strong governance structure to ensure transparency and alignment, improving delivery through standardized processes and automation, and advancing our security posture while reducing technical debt. We also committed to being a learning organization—investing in training and development for IS staff and providing educational opportunities for Council employees to use technology effectively and securely.

Looking ahead to 2026, we will continue to build on this momentum. Our priorities include expanding and strengthening our workforce to meet growing technology needs, accelerating technology upgrades across the enterprise, and advancing data management and governance to ensure information is accurate, accessible, and secure. These efforts will position the Council for greater resilience, efficiency, and innovation.

I am excited about the progress we’ve made and the opportunities ahead. Thank you for your partnership as we work together to deliver modern, secure, and reliable technology that supports the Council’s mission and serves our region.

**Gretchen White**  
Chief Information Officer  
Information Services

# 2025 at a glance



**149**

IS staff



**4,888**

Council staff supported



**190**

Applications supported



**4.5M+**

Chat messages sent



**26.3M**

Emails received



**3.4M**

Email threats intercepted



**172**

Resources on geospatial commons



**1200**

Visits to GIS catalogs



**474**

SharePoint sites



**974**

Databases



**866**

Servers managed



**575TB**

Cloud storage



**2395**

Laptops



**974**

Desktops



**4.12PB**

On-premise storage



**12,511**

Incidents Resolved



**14,448**

Service Requests fulfilled



**1015**

Mobile devices managed

# Workforce

In alignment with Regional Administration’s strategic goal to create an inclusive work environment that supports employee growth and retention, Information Services made significant strides in 2025 to strengthen our workforce and prepare for the Council’s future technology needs.



## Staffing

To meet these growing technology needs, we expanded our department by adding 21 new positions, including several key leadership roles. Among these, the newly created Deputy Chief Information Officer (Operations) will drive operational excellence, while the Director of the IS Business Office will ensure strong business integration with areas such as finance, procurement, and communications. These strategic additions position us to better support both current and future projects across the Council. Recruitment for all remaining vacancies will continue into 2026.

Information Services (IS) roles underwent a classification review that resulted in the creation of new positions and the update of existing job classifications to better align with current market standards. The review also established clearer career pathways and ensured that entry-level roles are included within the organizational structure.

In 2025, we faced challenges in filling key vacancies, which impacted our ability to maintain full staffing levels. To address these gaps and ensure continuity of critical work, we relied heavily on staff augmentation through contracted services. This approach allowed us to sustain progress on major initiatives, meet project deadlines, and provide essential support while recruitment efforts continued.

Leadership coffee chats were hosted in January of 2025 at coffee shops across the metro. IS staff had the chance to connect with leaders within the department in an open, relaxed environment to share ideas, ask questions, and build relationships.

## IS Skills Assessment & Training

Additionally, we assessed functions within the department to identify critical skill gaps and determine where leveraging managed services allowed current IS staff to focus on critical division initiatives. IS also embraced a culture shift by increasing training and development opportunities for staff.

These efforts reflect our commitment to creating a well-trained workforce, improving organizational culture, and positioning IS to meet operational and strategic objectives in the year ahead.



**57**  
external trainings  
attended by IS staff

# Technology

## Building a Modern, Secure, and Reliable Technology Foundation

In 2025, Information Services advanced the Council's technology strategy by modernizing infrastructure, strengthening cybersecurity, and streamlining service delivery to improve experiences for employees and customers. These efforts focused on upgrading devices, improving security, and laying the foundation for future automation and cloud migration.



### Stronger Security, Lower Risk

Information security remained a top organizational priority throughout the year, with continued progress in reducing operational and cyber risk. Risk reduction efforts included automated server patching, removal of local administrator privileges from endpoint devices, and the use of approval-based privilege elevation through a zero-trust application control platform. This approach prevents unauthorized software from running and allows temporary administrative access only when explicitly approved, significantly reducing the risk of malware and system misuse. More than 3,000 Windows 10 devices were upgraded to Windows 11, strengthening the organization's endpoint security baseline.

A new VPN solution was deployed to establish a common secure pipeline for remote access. Remote user traffic now remains outside the internal network by default, with all activity centrally inspected and filtered. Connectivity to on-premises systems is enabled only when required for business operations. This shift reduced inbound connectivity to internal infrastructure by approximately 95 percent, materially lowering the organization's external attack surface while maintaining secure access for staff.

The organization leveraged best-in-class email security controls, processing and filtering more than 30 million emails over the year. These tools detect and block zero-day threats and prevented more than 10,000 targeted attacks against Metropolitan Council email accounts.

Phishing simulations continued to measure and improve employee awareness and responsiveness to malicious email. As a result, the organization's phish-prone rate declined from 9.9 percent to 6.4 percent over the course of the year.

Policy modernization efforts strengthened governance and consistency across the organization. Information Services consolidated multiple technology procedure documents into unified acceptable use policies, improving clarity and enforceability. These updates streamlined policy management while aligning security expectations and controls more closely with industry best practices across all IT services.

**What this means for you:** Secure access to Council systems and stronger protection of your work, devices, and data—whether on-site or remote.

## Key Infrastructure Modernization

IS continues to identify existing infrastructure technology debt and we are executing targeted remediation strategies focused on the highest-risk areas, while advancing modernization initiatives to strengthen resilience and efficiency across our systems and platforms.

The core network infrastructure refresh began in 2025 and will finish in the first quarter of 2026, providing the foundation for deeper security monitoring and earlier malware detection. Wireless upgrades at Nicollet and FTH facilities resolved design issues and moved to a centrally managed architecture, improving reliability and simplifying operations. Additional wireless upgrades across Council sites will continue in 2026 to enhance user experience.

IS designed, tested, and deployed a modern bus router platform, Vehicle Area Network (VAN), that supports communication of vehicle health and route information. This new solution simplifies onboarding, streamlines ongoing maintenance, and delivers more reliable connectivity across the fleet—marking the first step toward a fully enhanced fleet communication system.

IS also successfully completed a major telephone systems upgrade that improved the supportability and security posture of the Council's Mitel phones and voicemail systems. Mitel is the primary communication system for ES, MT, and MTS including 9 call centers, over 500 emergency phones, and over 1900 desk phones. The system upgrade provided resiliency of inbound and outbound calls, nomadic 911 locating for compliance with Kari's Law and the Ray Bahm Act, as well as PCI compliance for credit card transactions, and internal documentation-based AI customer assistance. To promote greater collaboration, IS equipped additional Teams-enabled conference rooms, and will continue to add more throughout 2026.

**What this means for you:** More stable systems, better Wi-Fi, and smoother collaboration—whether you're in the office, at a facility, or working remotely.

## Devices, Access, and Endpoint Experience

The core endpoint management platform was upgraded to enhance patch compliance, streamline device lifecycle management, and support modern operating systems. Thousands of devices were refreshed and upgraded to secure Windows 11 image, and more than 300 planned iPhone replacements were completed across the Council. We also expanded our mobile offering to include Android devices. Additionally, we deployed over 50 new digital signs for MT and ES to support Council wide communications and division-specific initiatives. In 2026, IS is establishing a dedicated Endpoint Engineering function, starting with a newly hired Principal Endpoint Architect and soon an Endpoint Engineering Manager, to deliver a modern endpoint strategy and roadmap for the future.

**What this means for you:** Simpler, more consistent device experiences, faster updates, and stronger security, with a goal of reducing complexity for users.



1,300+  
computers  
replaced

## Applications & GIS

In 2025, we made targeted investments to reduce technical debt by retiring outdated systems and simplifying our technology stack to support critical applications. IS began migrating the widely used Oracle database from aging hardware to the cloud, improving security, stability, and performance for select applications.

IS began the launch of a new Grants Management system in 2025. Stakeholder requirements were gathered, a new grants management system was selected and procured, and the deployment process began. To ensure successful implementation and ongoing support, IS hired a full-time dedicated Business Systems Analyst. This investment will streamline grant processes, improve transparency, and provide a more consistent experience for staff and stakeholders.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) enhancements supported planning and operations with more accurate mapping and spatial data services. The following GIS resources were developed and launched in 2025:

- [Data Catalog](#)
- [Application Catalog](#)
- System Statements & Local Planning Handbook Maps + [App](#)



773  
active  
WebGIS  
users

Two new websites were launched in 2025 to support ongoing Council efforts.

- [Local Planning Handbook](#)
- [Imagine 2050](#)

Additionally, IS facilitated several Information Launches in 2025:

- Rider Alerts 2.0
- Show My Bus
- Wayfinding Signage Management
- Route / Stop Sequences in ScheduleDB
- Stable Trip IDs

IS completed modernization efforts on applications such as “Paddles and Headway”, the bus driver shift picking app. In collaboration with the divisions, IS created a standard release process for Idash and TFS. The release process includes coordinated prioritization by stakeholders, testing, deployment, and post-release maintenance. MT Trip Agents were onboarded into timekeeping functions in Idash.

**What this means for you:** Cleaner forms and sites, faster and more reliable data systems, and better tools to support your daily work.



## Governance

In 2025, Information Services advanced enterprise governance to improve decision-making, manage risk, and promote systems-thinking across the Council. Strong governance serves as the foundation for organizational integrity and accountability, ensuring that resources are aligned with strategic priorities, risks are proactively managed, and decisions are transparent. By embedding strong governance practices, IS strengthens trust, fosters collaboration, and creates a resilient framework for sustainable growth.

### Technology Oversight Committee (TOC)

The Technology Oversight Committee (TOC), launched in October 2024, met quarterly throughout 2025 to review major technology initiatives and establish operating models. This cross-divisional committee ensures consistent, transparent governance and replaces previous fragmented approaches to technology decision-making. Appointed by the Regional Administrator, TOC membership includes representation from all divisions:

- **Gretchen White**, Chief Information Officer, Information Services, RA
- **Brian Funk**, Deputy General Manager, Chief Operating Officer, MT
- **Alyssa Haugen**, Assistant General Manager, Administration & External Affairs, MT
- **Sara Smith**, Assistant General Manager, Operations Support Services, ES
- **Terri Smith**, Director, Metro HRA, CD
- **Gerri Sutton**, Director, Contracted Transit Services, MTS

Purpose	Committee Deliverables
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Align IT priorities with Council strategy and goals</li><li>• Assess and develop plan to managed enterprise technology risk</li><li>• Oversight of technology standards and practices</li><li>• Approver for technology efforts above a certain threshold</li><li>• Approve operating models to clarify responsibilities</li><li>• Strengthen relationships between IS and divisions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Endorse technology roadmap</li><li>• Review and approve technology projects and initiatives considering:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Risk analysis</li><li>- Financial impact</li><li>- Value</li></ul></li><li>• Determine operating model for technology initiatives</li><li>• Provide clear technology guidance to the organization</li><li>• Review and recommend technology standards and policies</li></ul>

**What this means for you:** The TOC delivers centralized, transparent, cross-divisional governance for technology decisions, replacing fragmented approaches and guiding major initiatives with consistent oversight

## Project Management Office (PMO)

To strengthen prioritization and accountability, we matured our IS Project Management Office, resulting in clearer project structures and an increase in the number of formalized projects. The [Leadership Action Board \(LAB\)](#) was developed in 2025 and formally launched in January 2026. This tool provides increased transparency, consistent communication, overall project health indicators, and recognition of project accomplishments. The Quality Assurance (QA) Center of Excellence (CoE) launched in 2025 to provide governance and consistency for QA support on large projects and programs across the council. The QA CoE establishes and maintains QA standards, best practices and methodologies, while creating and distributing shared tools, templates, and artifacts to support effective and repeatable IS project delivery.

An OCM (Organizational Change Management) team was created and operationalized to support the organizational change required to accelerate benefits realization and change management as a component of the project lifecycle.

The PMO also launched the pilot of a new role, Technology Business Partner, that will be a strategic partner for each division to assist them to better leverage our technology capabilities to realize their business outcomes.

**What this means for you:** Greater consistency and predictability of program and project delivery, greater transparency and collaboration, improved prioritization and resource management, and a focus on stakeholder partnership.



## Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Recognizing the growing role of artificial intelligence, we established a governance framework that includes two dedicated teams:

- AI Community of Practice – A collaborative forum with representation across the divisions for discussing business needs, sharing best practices, and exploring tools and capabilities.
- AI Strategy Team – A smaller group comprised of IS architecture, security, General Counsel, and select division representatives responsible for developing and recommending AI strategy for TOC review.

Currently, a pilot group is leveraging AI tools such as Microsoft Copilot and GitHub's AI capabilities to accelerate coding activities and improve development efficiency.

**What this means for you:** We're accelerating business value by instituting AI governance and a two-tier AI leadership structure, with pilots using AI tools to boost development speed while ensuring cross-functional oversight and policy alignment.

## Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

In 2025, IS prioritized the advancement of mission-critical systems and tools that The Council's business areas and employees rely on every day. Strategic enhancements and upgrades to platforms such as PeopleSoft HRMS and Finance, Hyperion, and WAM enabled more streamlined and effective payroll, budgeting, and asset management operations. At the same time, we modernized legacy applications and migrated unsupported systems to secure, stable environments—significantly reducing downtime, strengthening resilience, and improving overall organizational performance.

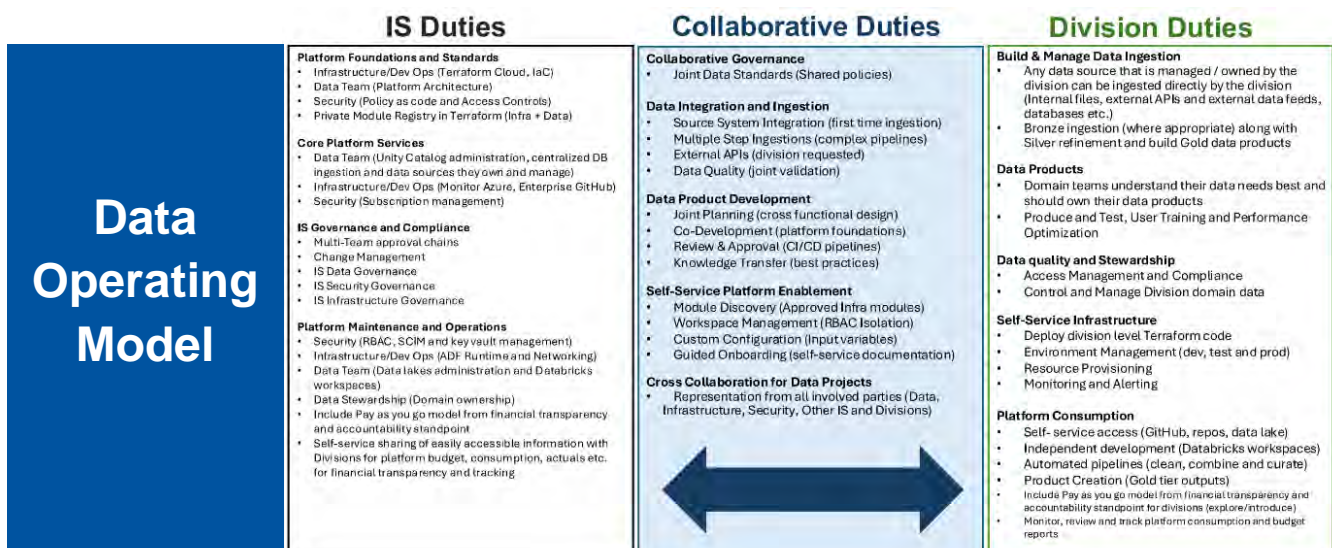
To strengthen our ERP strategy, a third-party partner was engaged to provide an independent risk assessment and validation. Their work included comprehensive information gathering and functional needs assessments with participants from each division. They also conducted a risk assessment to identify potential challenges and assisted with the development of a roadmap that outlines priorities, mitigates risks, and sets a clear direction for the future of the ERP project.

**What this means for you:** More stable, secure, and efficient systems to support daily work, minimized downtime, and streamlined processes.

## Data Governance

In 2025, significant progress was made in data governance and modernization. IS established the Chief Data Officer (CDO) role, a critical step toward enhancing data governance within the Council. The CDO provides leadership and accountability for data strategy, ensuring that data is managed as a valuable asset.

A Council-wide data and analytics initiative was established to create an enterprise data platform and data operating model to enable scalable, secure, and supportable data ingestion, storage, cataloging, and analytics across all Council divisions. As part of this effort a cross functional team evaluated several enterprise data platforms (POCs) and selected a powerful platform called Databricks. Work is currently underway to move the POC to production. This platform will enable users to better find and use data for reporting, analytics, and AI. It will scale to meet the growing business demands, reduce data silos, eliminate workarounds and duplicate efforts.



# Serving the Council



## ServiceWorks

In 2025, Information Services launched the first phase of the ServiceWorks Program, establishing a standardized framework based on IT Service Management (ITSM) principles. This phase introduced consistent practices for

Incident, Service Request, Problem, and Change Management, improving issue resolution, request fulfillment, root-cause analysis, and change planning. Enhancements such as the Support Portal and Change Calendar increased transparency, simplified engagement with Information Services, and reduced operational risk, creating a more efficient and user-centered service experience while setting the stage for continued ServiceWorks maturity in 2026.

Early results demonstrate the impact of the new Problem Management practice and approach. A significant performance issue in the ES LIMS software was resolved by rescheduling a data warehouse job and optimizing a key report query, reducing run time from 22 minutes to 7 seconds. This improvement greatly enhanced system performance for users and highlights the tangible operational benefits already achieved through ServiceWorks. Visit the ServiceWorks Program [page](#) on MetNet for additional details and training resources.

## Training for Council Employees

Information Services does more than maintain systems and applications—we empower employees to use technology effectively and securely. IS hosted the following training sessions in 2025, designed to help staff get the most out of available tools, introduce new processes and technologies, and educate employees on security best practices:

- 6 [cybersecurity sessions \(1,000+ attendees\)](#), ([slides](#))
- 7 [Enterprise Content Management trainings](#)
- 4 GIS user groups + updated LOD GIS training video
- 3 [ServiceWorks trainings](#) + open office hours

## Data Management

Enterprise Content Management (ECM) modernization continued, improving how documents and records are stored, secured, and retrieved across the organization. Two modern MetNet sites were launched as part of a full refresh, and 70 unused sites were decommissioned to reduce technical debt. The MetNet modernization effort will continue through 2026, with a full migration planned by the end of the year.

As the Council continues to serve the region, data visualization has become an essential tool for informed decision-making. In 2025 IS supported this need by creating and expanding dashboards that provide clear, actionable insights, helping leaders and staff make data-driven decisions with confidence.

390 Robert Street North  
Saint Paul, MN 55101-1805

651-602-1000  
TTY 651-291-0904  
[public.info@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:public.info@metc.state.mn.us)  
[metro council.org](http://metro council.org)

