

Austin Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission FY 2008 - 2009 Workplan

1. Access Television and Community Media

Promote the use and public support of access television and community media. Investigate ways to sustain and improve access television.

- Assist the Telecommunications and Regulatory Affairs (TARA) office in the performance evaluation of Public Access Community Television (PACT), the public access television management contractor.
- Receive periodic reports from PACT management, including updates on accomplishments, obstacles, producer grievances and concerns, operating hours, fees, producer training, and events..
- Monitor status and resolution of producer grievances.
- Receive feedback from public access producer community.
- Monitor building issues at the city-owned public access facility and provide recommendations to staff and Council.
- Support local PEG (public, educational, and governmental) access programming and coordination between regional PEG providers.
- Review and monitor status of access television funding. Convene a task force to investigate and make recommendations to Council on future access television funding.
- Research and support new distribution mechanisms for access programming, such as online streaming.
- Support outreach efforts to increase public awareness of and public support for access programming and community media.

2. Grant for Technology Opportunities

Provide support and oversight to the Grant for Technology Opportunities (GTOPs) program to assure continued success.

- Primary goal is to maintain or grow the annual budget commitment for GTOPs.
- Continue working with TARA to provide reports to Council on GTOPs status and accomplishments.
- Manage the process to review grant applications and make award recommendations.
- Continue to monitor and review the GTOPs goals, process, and procedures.
- Provide recommendations to Council and TARA on how to sustain and improve the program.
- Continue working with TARA and other organizations to encourage promotional efforts and build community awareness of GTOPs.
 - Request periodic tours of and presentations from past GTOPs recipients.

- Offer presentations of GTOPs successes and achievements to Council.
- Request proclamation to recognize GTOPs program.

3. Technology Ascertainment Study

Advocate for a Technology Ascertainment Study of information and communication technology needs and use in our community.

- Work with TARA to identify potential goals, scope, and methods for the study.
- Identify possible funding mechanisms for study.
- Make recommendations to Council and staff.

4. Community Forum Series

Continue to support a series of community forums, to bring together citizens to discuss and learn about technology and media issues that affect our community.

- Complete series focusing on the Digital Television transition.
- Identify potential forum topics and, where appropriate, potential community partners.
- Assist in the planning, publicity and production of planned forums.

5. Digital Inclusion and Community Technology Initiative

Continue to support the City of Austin opportunities, initiatives and budgeted plans for expanding equitable public access to telecommunications and information services for all of Austin. Continue to support the City of Austin Community Technology Initiative (CTIAustin). Continue to support community networks and community technology centers. Continue to work with programs, events and organizations that assist local interactive, music, film, digital entertainment companies, community media and community technology groups.

- Continue to investigate digital divide issues and identify digital opportunities for Austin citizens.
- Investigate and support opportunities for expanded public wireless access in city facilities and venues.
- Receive periodic updates from Austin Free-Net and other Community Technology Initiative partners.
- Monitor review process for City of Austin web site and offer recommendations for improved access and effectiveness.
- Offer invitations to community groups to address the commission.

6. Community Technologies and Emerging Technologies

Continue to investigate and review emerging technology offerings including and not limited to: broadband, Wi-Fi, Wi-Max, broadband-over-power lines (BPL), open spectrum and ultra-wideband wireless technologies, proprietary wireless/data/cellular services, streaming media, digital television transmission, open source software, as well as opportunities created by technology convergence.

- Identify new emerging technologies that merit further review and report findings to Council Subcommittee on Emerging Technologies.
- Offer invitations to technology providers and technology experts to address the commission.
- Seek invitations from technology providers for on-site visits to learn about emerging technologies.

7. Legislative, Regulatory and Consumer Issues

Continue to monitor legislative and regulatory issues relating to regulated communication industries and media, at both the federal and state levels. Receive periodic updates from TARA. Make recommendations to staff and Council.

Continue to monitor public impact of changes in communication services and providers, including video and broadband services.

8. Program and Funding Recommendations

Provide program and funding recommendations for FY 2008-09 based on workplan items as appropriate.

9. Coordination and Communication

Develop and maintain working relationships with other boards and commissions, other city departments, event organizers, and community groups; including request for periodic updates from Communications and Technology Management (CTM) on City technology programs.