NAPA COUNTY
RESPONSE TO THE GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT ON
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES IN NAPA COUNTY

June 21, 2022

Introduction

The "Information Technology Services in Napa County" final investigative report (Report) of the 2022-2023 Napa County Civil Grand Jury presents five (5) findings, five (5) recommendations and one (1) commendation related to ITS in Napa County. This letter represents the responses of the Napa County Board of Supervisors and County Executive Officer (CEO) and Chief Information Officer (CIO), pursuant to California Penal Code Section 933.05.

Napa County Board of Supervisors and County Executive Officer would like to thank the Grand Jury for their work, and for the opportunity to respond to the findings and recommendations in the final investigative report.

Findings

Finding 1. Napa County has insufficient network bandwidth for the increasing use of video conferencing, document imaging, and large file management.

The CIO and CEO agrees with this finding. With the County's move to increased online access and to provide more digital services, data and video content has increased and will continue to increase into the future. ITS is assisting County departments to provide digital access and services, and ITS considers network bandwidth needs when moving to digital government. This includes monitoring network bandwidth and increasing bandwidth as limits (usage exceeding 70%) are reached for the entire County. There are other aspects that contribute to insufficient bandwidth, which ITS cannot control. These include remote offices in locations where provided internet services are underserved by the internet services providers, telework situations where personal home internet services are not sufficient, and certain cloud-based applications that can slow down during peak hours of usage. ITS will commit to reviewing network utilization data for the previous 30 days to identify possible network saturation.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding, and with the CEO and CIO.

Finding 2. In at least one instance a County developed application took longer to implement and was more difficult to maintain than a packaged application.

The CIO and CEO agree partially with this finding. In the past ITS built custom applications for departments because there were limited vendor solutions available that fit department needs. This has changed greatly over the years and ITS has moved away from creating and maintaining custom built applications.

For example:

- ITS replaced an in-house website content management system with a vendor-based website content management system.
- ITS replaced an in-house ticketing system with a vendor-based solution.

- ITS replaced an in-house agenda management system with a vendor-based solution.
- ITS retired 11% of in-house electronic forms (e-Forms) used for financial and Human Resource requests and approvals with e-Form functionality in the County's new Enterprise Resource Planning system.

ITS continues to look for opportunities to replace custom-built applications with vendor applications, with a preference for cloud-based solutions, when making major upgrades in-house applications. Vendor cloud-based solutions are preferable over vendor solutions installed in our internal servers because supporting technical infrastructure for cloud applications are managed by the vendor, not ITS.

If a vendor solution is not available to meet the needs of departments, ITS will still need to consider a custom-build approach. Consideration factors will include the cost to build the solution and the cost of annual support. Annual support costs include application support staff, system support staff and related hardware and software tools licensing and maintenance.

With regards to the comment on that one instance that a county application (CJNet) took longer to implement and is difficult to maintain, there were no vendor solutions available that fulfilled criminal justice department needs. Part of the implementation included improvements to business practices, which added more time to the overall project. In addition, these departments do not want to migrate off this platform currently.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the CEO.

Finding 3. Multiple departments would benefit from a common data management system as part of the County infrastructure.

The CIO and CEO agree with this finding.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the CEO.

Finding 4. The County's focus on annual and department-level budgeting makes planning and adoption of longer term infrastructure and application development project more difficult.

The CIO and CEO agree with this finding. Working with the CEO and Auditor-Controller's office, ITS will use functionality in the new financial system to budget for and track multi-year infrastructure and application projects, beginning in the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the CEO.

Findings 5. There in not a comprehensive County-wide strategy on IT infrastructure and applications.

The CIO and CEO agree with this finding. This finding will be addressed either through a County-wide strategic plan or the ITS strategic plan as discussed in Recommendation 1 and Recommendation 2.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the CEO.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 1: By June 1, 2024, the Napa County CEO articulates a vision for digital government that facilitates cross department collaboration, community engagement and enhances government productivity.

Response, Chief information Officer and County Executive Officer: The recommendation requires further analysis. The CEO and ITS will need to consider how best to articulate the County's vision for digital government, which could be part of the County's new strategic plan. Also, see Recommendation 2 regarding an IT strategic plan.

Response, Board of Supervisors: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the CEO.

Recommendation 2: Starting with the 2024-2025 budget cycle, the Napa County CEO adopt an annual IT strategic plan that includes multi-year objectives and investments in data integration, infrastructure, communication and digitization.

Response, Chief information Officer and County Executive Officer: The recommendation will be implemented. ITS has a draft of a 3-year strategic plan completed. The plan does include multi-year objectives around big data, which includes data strategy and governance, data integration, infrastructure, communications, and digital initiatives. The plan, however, needs to be approved by the CEO before it can be integrated into the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budget plan.

Response, Board of Supervisors: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the CEO.

Recommendation 3: By June 1, 2024, the Napa County CEO should initiate a project to implement a common data management system in order to share information across departments and applications.

Response, Chief information Officer and County Executive Officer: This recommendation will be implemented. Information Technology Services posted a request for proposal (RFP) for an enterprise data management system in May 2023 seeking proposals from respondents to provide an enterprise data management solution and related implementation services. The plan is to bring an agreement to the Board of Supervisors with the selected vendor in the Fall of 2023 and commence with the implementation after approval. This will be a 3-to-4-year implementation with multiple phases. The goal is to complete the first phase by the Spring of 2025.

Response, Board of Supervisors: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the CEO.

Recommendation 4: By December 1, 2023, the Napa County CEO should consider a policy that new proprietary (County developed) applications be deployed by exception only.

Response, Chief information Officer and County Executive Officer: This recommendation requires further analysis. CEO and ITS will consider a policy for this recommendation by December 1, 2023. As noted in the response to Finding 2 above, the policy will need to allow for new proprietary application development if a vendor solution is not available, or when the cost of vendor solutions is prohibitive.

Response, Board of Supervisors: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the CEO.

Recommendation 5: By December 1, 2023, The Napa County CEO should consider a policy that existing proprietary applications be replaced by package applications.

Response, Chief information Officer and County Executive Officer: The recommendation requires further analysis. CEO and ITS will consider a policy for this recommendation or combine this recommendation into the policy noted in the response to Recommendation 4. As noted in the response to Finding 2 above, the policy will need to allow for replacement proprietary application development if a vendor solution is not available, or when the cost of vendor solutions is prohibitive.

Response, Board of Supervisors: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the CEO.