



## City of Southlake cuts emergency response times and makes municipal planning more transparent with Smartsheet

With Smartsheet, the city of Southlake can get real-time insights into delays in emergency dispatch and improve response times, as well as giving community members visibility into civic projects.

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**In four to six minutes, brain death occurs once you stop breathing. Time is tissue, and our emergency responders are managing that on a daily basis. And I know, because of our Smartsheet solution improving response times, that there are people walking this globe who may not have been otherwise.**

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Kurt Hall, Deputy Fire Chief,  
City of Southlake



**Customer:**

City of Southlake

**Industry:**

Government

**Organization Size:**

Medium (50-999 employees)

**Region:**

North America

**Website:**

[cityofsouthlake.com](http://cityofsouthlake.com)

Southlake, Texas, is home to more than 30,000 people and 2,000 businesses within 22.5 square miles located in North Tarrant County. The city's goal is to provide municipal services that support the highest quality of life for residents, businesses and visitors by balancing efficiency, fiscal responsibility, transparency and sustainability.

**Background:**

A municipal government's primary job is to provide citizens with the highest-quality services, from emergency response to recreational facilities and civic improvements. The city of Southlake, Texas, uses Smartsheet to provide real-time monitoring and management of emergency response, share project status and completion with citizens, and enable city employees to more efficiently and effectively serve the people of the community.

*"We're always doing more with less," says Kurt Hall, deputy fire chief for Southlake. "Smartsheet frees up time for other projects, other teams, and other benefits in different parts of the city. Not only am I working in the fire department, but I'm also helping in community services or the library. Smartsheet gives us more views into the overall management of the organization; it's a collaborative approach and a collaborative benefit."*

A city of 37,000 in the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area, Southlake provides standard municipal services such as fire, police, public works, recreational facilities, utilities, and more. City administrators' goal is to meet the highest standards and continually improve quality and performance, whether that's reducing emergency response times or making work processes more efficient to save time and budget.

Dale Dean, chief performance and innovation officer for the city, started his Southlake career in 2011 as IT director, looking for ways to simplify collaboration and management for technical projects that impact numerous departments. He realized that Smartsheet could replace fragmented spreadsheets and lengthy email trails with a single central place for capturing and managing data.

**Solution:**

Today the city of Southlake uses Smartsheet for strategic planning, collaboration, software

**Customer:**

Real-time data enables the team to identify trends and develop strategic solutions. A delay serving particular neighborhoods may mean it's time to build a new fire station, while a lag in dispatch time might be solved with additional training for new staff. If responders are consistently beating their targets, the chief might decide to update the goal.



**Smartsheet allows us to manage our response times to make sure we're compliant with our benchmarks. I'm in the dashboards on a regular basis, communicating with our dispatchers and our command staff, staying on top of the data, and looking for problems. We're using it as a tool to not only meet our benchmarks but try to continuously lower them as well.**



Kurt Hall, Deputy Fire Chief,  
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management and product selection, and service management and analytics. The platform helps teams structure long-term planning, providing leadership with a bird's-eye view plus the ability to drill down into individual initiatives and tasks to see progress or blockers. It also automates information sharing and alerts, allowing faster identification and solution of problems.

## Real-time insight into emergency dispatch performance

One of the city's most important Smartsheet solutions is used to manage emergency response times. The city meets international accreditation standards, which set tight targets — measured in seconds — for dispatch (the time between when a call comes in and a response team is ordered to move), turnout time (the speed with which responders go from getting those orders to moving out of the fire station), travel time to the emergency site, and the total of all three. Using Smartsheet, Hall and his colleagues automatically capture those times and can immediately flag when a response exceeds the target.

*"Before, we were tracking all our dispatch data manually, through emails, phone calls, and spreadsheets," Hall says. "Now every step of the process is fully automated, so instead of having to use old data to make decisions, we're getting that information in real time. Our personnel work 24 hours; if a battalion chief has gotten one or two dispatch alerts, we can look at it immediately and figure out what the problem is."*

## City planning that gives residents full visibility and insight

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### In a Nutshell:

The city's master planning is being built on Smartsheet to provide visibility and accountability across a complex matrix of interrelated projects and goals. From capital improvements and water conservation to tourism and parks, Southlake strategic planning is developed through collaboration by residents and elected officials. Comprehensive plans for departments and broad areas are made up of individual projects, which in turn can be divided into tasks and dependencies. As budgets or deadlines change, that can be traced back up to the top so leaders can see when a small update has a major effect. And it's all available for members of the community to see and follow up with their elected officials about what it means to them.



**Our work plans and reports are broken down into quarters. If you are a citizen and you want to see the status of whatever project you're interested in, you can see the percentage completion and know if it's on budget. You get a lot of information, not only about the global comprehensive plans themselves but actual individual projects, like a park project — roughly when it's going to be completed and opened.**



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*"Our work plans and reports are broken down into quarters," Hall says. "One of the enhancements we are working on is, if you are a citizen and you want to see the status of whatever project you're interested in, you will be able to see the percentage completion and know if it's on budget. You will get a lot of information, not only about the global comprehensive plans themselves but actual individual projects, like a park project – roughly when it's going to be completed and opened."*

One of the early back-end uses of Smartsheet made a huge difference for administrative teams. A number of oversight systems use Laserfiche to update SQL data tables, but before Smartsheet, users needed to contact IT and request manual updates. Dean and his team created an integration that allows automatic updating of the tables, so a process that could take as many as five days is now completed in less than a minutes. That simple update started a pattern of systematically working unnecessary time lag out of as many processes as possible by identifying not just one-time fixes but strategic improvements.

The platform's ease of use encourages more users to dive in and build their own solutions. The city has more than 100 licensed users and twice as many collaborators, and Dean constantly hears of new solutions being developed on different teams. New users have access to their peers and to Smartsheet training and tutorials, helping even those who are less proficient with computers quickly get up to speed.

“**Everybody knows they can come to me if they have a problem with Smartsheet. But I get very few calls, maybe once a quarter, and when I do it's usually someone who wants to do an integration. They're managing it themselves as a user base. That speaks to user adoption, the acceptance of Smartsheet within the city, and how easy it is to use.**”

Dale Dean, Chief Performance and Innovation Officer, City of Southlake