



Failing to plan is
planning to sprawl.



How to reduce IT sprawl? Think like an urban planner.

Organizations, like cities, grow over time. While growth is a sign of a healthy organization – and a healthy city – without guidance or planning, it can quickly lead to sprawl. Today, many IT leaders are battling an environment of disconnected business applications and information silos. This IT sprawl, if left unchecked, can increase operational, infrastructure and support costs, as well as negatively impact employee productivity and customer experience.

Urban planners fight sprawl and other inefficiencies by designing strategies for growth management. To keep your IT environment from sprawling out of control, it helps to think like an urban planner.

These urban planning principles are a great place to start.

- Plan for the future, not the here and now.
- Improve transit to increase efficiency.
- Plan for peak demand.
- Make a blackout backup plan.
- Collaborate.
- Engage your community.
- Embrace your history.
- The power of one.



1

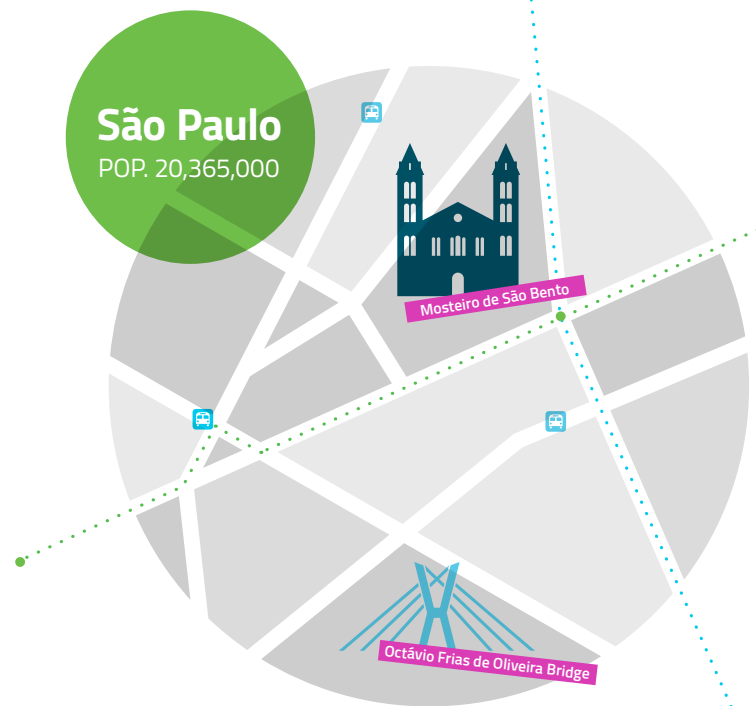
Plan for the future,
not the here and now.

Change is inevitable. That's why urban planners strive to design future-proof cities.

CIOs should have the same mindset, especially as digital transformation becomes the new business imperative. Although you might not be able to predict every change that's coming, you can certainly make decisions based on where you want to be in the future. Prioritizing operational agility is important here. Look for an information platform that's configurable without code, scalable, continually enhanced and easily upgradable.

For urban planners and CIOs alike, failing to plan is planning to fail. Consider what happened in São Paulo, Brazil, in the 1940s. When development began to expand beyond the boundaries of municipal government jurisdiction, the city failed to implement a plan for managing that growth. Now São Paulo's slum population resides in the periphery of the city, far from adequate infrastructure and economic opportunity.¹

To avoid similar missteps, it's important to plan for business capacity instead of years – especially today, as business demands continue to outpace IT's ability to meet them. When planning for the future, think in terms of what you need in order to accommodate "population growth" (i.e., users), rather than making assumptions about what you'll need when you reach an arbitrary date on a calendar. Increasingly, CIOs are considering their role as technology regulators. When cities expand without government control, they descend into chaos, and the same goes for organizations without strong IT guidance. Every inefficiency and disconnected application wastes IT resources you don't have.



The burden of blight.

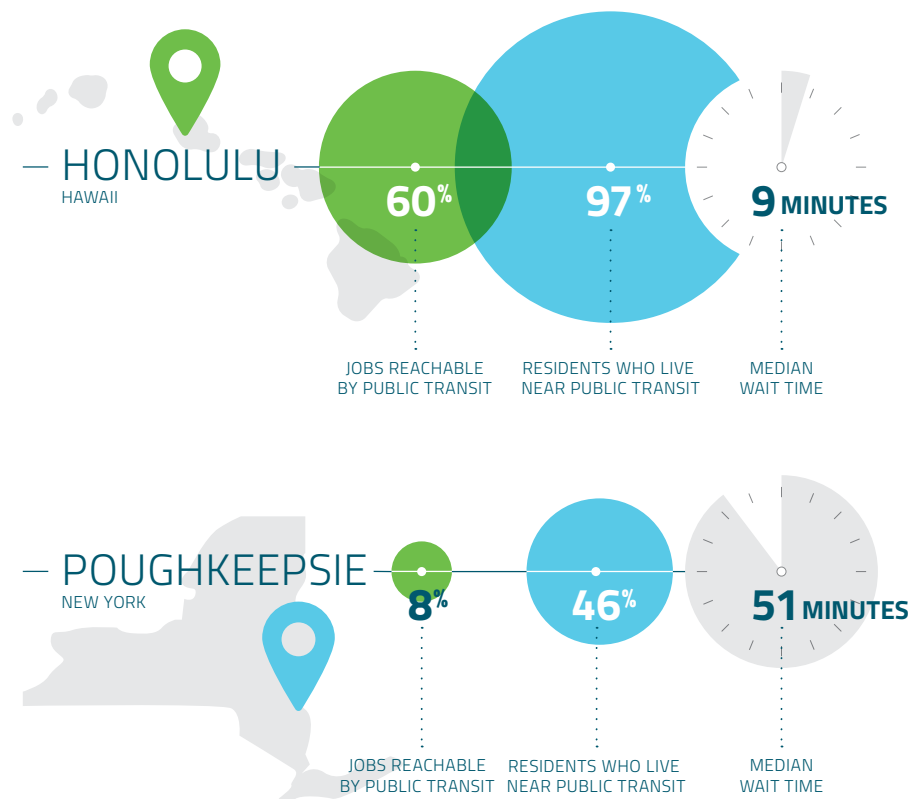
Urban blight is the process by which previously functional parts of a city fall into disrepair, draining city resources that could otherwise be put to better use. "IT blight" – unused systems that still need to be maintained, strain both IT staff and budgets. To combat this problem, determine which systems no longer serve a purpose and look for a unified information management platform that can help you replace antiquated applications, integrate other existing applications and build new applications on one consistent architecture.

2

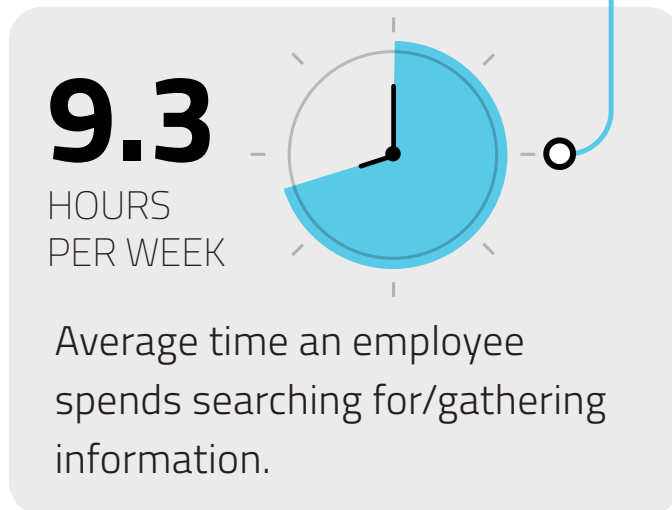
Improve transit to increase efficiency.

Some cities have excellent public transit systems – others, not so much.

Public transit inefficiencies have far-reaching consequences. A large, ongoing study from Harvard University finds that commuting time is the single strongest factor in the odds of escaping poverty.² That means cities like Honolulu are better equipped than cities like Poughkeepsie for addressing issues related to poverty, including health, education and crime.³ For urban planners, one decision can have a ripple effect, and the same holds true for CIOs.



Source: Brookings Institution.



Source: McKinsey Global Institute.

Just as public transit inefficiencies can add up to have a significant impact on citizens' quality of life, requiring employees to travel to disparate systems and locations to access work materials and information can reduce productivity, costing organizations time and money. Additionally, duplicate functionality wastes resources and increases risks associated with version control, compliance and security.

Consider, for example, the work of an employee in the human resources department of your organization. This person may need to navigate through multiple IT systems or even travel to different locations to manually track down all the information she needs to properly onboard every new employee and set up each with access to health insurance, a 401(k) account

and other benefits. Inefficiencies like this may seem small, but they add up.

Employees can accomplish more when they have easy access to the resources they need; and information moves more efficiently when applications rely on a single information management platform that can be used across departments. Such "symphonized" systems can improve customer experience and lower operational overhead, running as smoothly as a well-designed public transit operation.

On the other hand, if your organization's systems function more like Poughkeepsie's public transit, you run the risk of increasing costs, wasting time and, ultimately, damaging customer experience.

An aerial photograph of a dense urban area, likely a city center, showing a grid of streets and numerous buildings. Four large, semi-transparent circular highlights are overlaid on the image: a cyan circle in the top left, a magenta circle in the top right, a green circle in the bottom left, and a teal circle in the bottom right. A pink rectangular box is positioned in the upper middle of the image, containing the number '3' and the text 'Plan for peak demand.'.

3

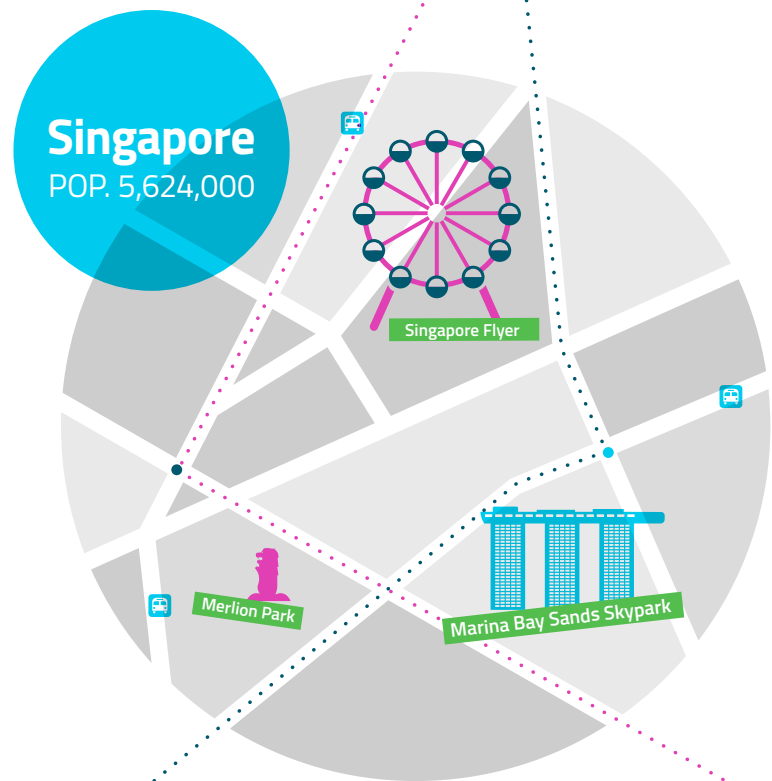
Plan for peak demand.

City centers experience more traffic than the outskirts, and certain times of day put additional strain on city infrastructures.

When mapping out city streets, urban planners design with peak demand in mind. Consider, for example, professional sports stadiums that sit dormant most of the time but fill to capacity during sporting events. City planners must accommodate traffic and provide parking for game days, not just every day.

Organizations also experience peak demand. For example, financial workflows are heaviest at the end of the month. Salaries and invoices need to be paid so the month can be officially “closed out,” and it’s not uncommon for bottlenecks to occur. In many financial departments, expensive, highly trained staff wastes time manually chasing down invoices and requesting approvals.

A robust information management platform that supports your overall application strategy can help save time and reduce costs by eliminating low-value tasks. Instead, users can set up automatic workflows that route documents to the right people and through the right processes. Additionally, automated workload balancing and threshold alerts to higher management enable staff to work more efficiently by smoothing out some of the ebb and flow that naturally occur in workloads.



Incentives are powerful.

When managing heavy traffic, it can help to think outside the box. Seeking to reduce foot traffic during peak commute hours, Singapore launched an initiative in 2013 to waive subway fares for riders who traveled earlier in the morning. The result? A full 7 percent of commuters moved to an earlier schedule, significantly reducing foot traffic.⁴ CIOs can apply this wisdom by tapping into the power of incentives to change user behavior. Start thinking about what your organization could offer teams as an incentive to assess which systems could be replaced or consolidated to reduce sprawl. To manage heavy traffic, look for a single platform that is optimized to balance peak demand and automate tasks during downtime.



4

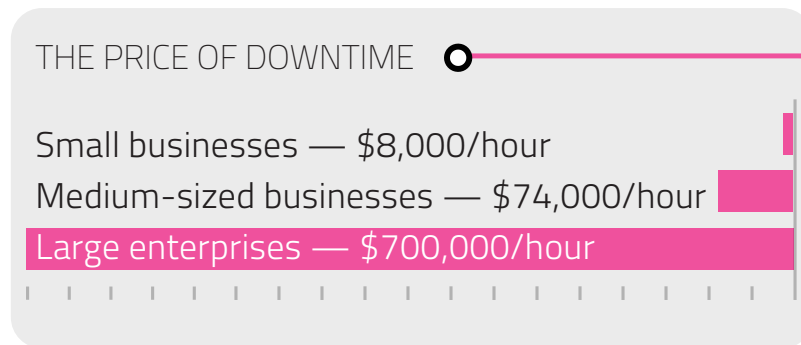
Make a blackout backup plan.

What happens when part of your system goes down? Do you have a backup plan that enables work to securely continue?

What happens when part of your system goes down? Do you have a backup plan that enables work to securely continue? Cities must be designed to withstand myriad catastrophes. Urban planners build levies to prevent flooding, and ensure firehouses and police stations are located in strategic areas so emergency vehicles can respond quickly.

For CIOs, a resiliency plan can help minimize downtime and maintain organizational continuity. To do this, IT should invest in technology that enables users to access vital information through the cloud. To keep your information secure and accessible, look for a solution that is fault-tolerant and backed up to an off-premises data center.

What's the alternative? Cities that fail to adequately prepare for disaster risk putting their citizens in danger. While the stakes for CIOs may not be a matter of life and death, planning for the worst is still crucial to the health of your organization.



Source: International Data Corporation.

Weathering the storm with cloud technology.

In 2012, Superstorm Sandy devastated the U.S. East Coast, forcing families and businesses to rebuild. One such business, ROM Reinsurance (ROM), which is based in Manhattan, N.Y., lost power and connectivity to its IT systems, bringing all business functions to a halt. After that, ROM decided to switch its enterprise content management (ECM) deployment from an on-premises solution to a cloud-based one. In doing so, ROM regained business functionality and access to information, enabling the company to support clients affected by the storm and helping ensure they would stay up and running in case of any future disaster.



5

Collaborate.

Urban planners don't build cities alone; they take the viewpoints of others into account, reaching out to experts in a variety of fields to ensure every aspect of a city works together.

Increasingly, CIOs are working in the same way. To accomplish your goals, it's necessary to gain buy-in from not only C-suite executives but also line-of-business leaders and other stakeholders.

While these business leaders are sure to benefit from symphonized systems, they may not understand how sprawl contributes to their problems and impacts their results. By highlighting examples of sprawl within your enterprise and demonstrating how sprawl reduction can help your organization avoid pitfalls and meet goals, you can establish the importance of symphonized systems.

To prevent further IT sprawl from occurring in the future, it's important to create a strategy for deploying new applications. Work with leaders in your organization to implement a decision tree to help direct the path to take when building a new application.

Once leadership is aligned on goals and a strategy for procuring new applications, you're positioned to implement a plan that helps reduce sprawl while letting your organization grow and evolve. Now that's something everyone can get behind.

○ Common causes of IT sprawl

Departments buy their own software applications (known as "shadow IT").

IT buys or builds niche applications for each business area without an overall strategy.

IT purchases technologies with overlapping functionalities, sometimes inadvertently.



6

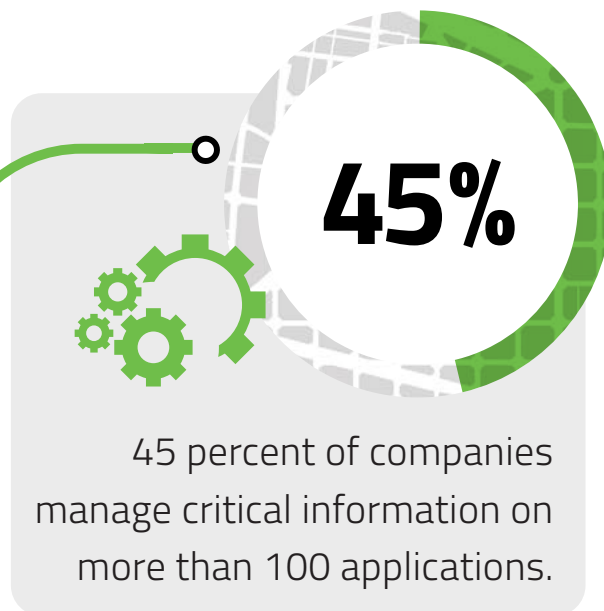
Engage your community.

Just as urban planners consult government agencies, sociologists and architects to solicit options and insights, they also reach out to the citizens they're designing for.

No one knows better than citizens what's working and what isn't in a community. Likewise, your users can provide valuable insights into how they work every day and how technology helps or hinders their processes.

Find out which applications users access daily and which are used infrequently. Then determine areas of crossover in information and capabilities. There may be redundancies your users aren't even aware exists. Forrester Research conducted a survey of U.S. and EU enterprises that found 45 percent of companies use 100 or more applications on a weekly basis to manage critical business information.

When reducing IT sprawl, it's important to learn which features and capabilities users find crucial. That way, when retiring an application, you can ensure users still have access to similar features and capabilities within another application. You can also design new applications with your users' needs in mind.



Source: Forrester Research.

Consider these user insights and make a game plan.

- Start by identifying the applications that contain critical information and that your users are accessing on a regular basis – but use legacy, outdated or unsupported technologies. These present the biggest risk in the event they fail.
- Next, design a proactive plan for consolidating these applications on one of your core platforms.



7

Embrace your history.

As cities evolve, urban planners make connections between the past, present and future.

Urban planners can't ignore current infrastructure any more than CIOs can avoid integrating new technologies with current systems.

The lesson for CIOs? Instead of buying individual technologies to capture and store documents, automate business processes, manage cases and securely share information through the cloud, look for a single platform that provides all these capabilities seamlessly integrated together.

Be wary, however, of vendors who offer information management solutions that actually contribute to IT sprawl instead of helping to minimize it. Many vendors offer a wide array of functionality, but, upon closer inspection, their solutions are revealed to be a hodge-podge of acquired software applications, each built using its own architecture.

By contrast, a unified information management platform can help CIOs build on legacy systems, create new applications and prepare for future needs. Just as urban planners adapt to changing needs as cities grow, an agile platform morphs to meet ever-changing organizational demands.

Look for these features in a future-proof platform.

Configurable without code

- Point-and-click configuration makes setup a snap.
- Minimal expensive, time-consuming coding or scripting.

Scalable across your organization

- Never outgrow your system.
- System maintains speed and performance as it expands.

Continually enhanced

- System stays current with tech innovations.
- System supports the latest operating systems, browsers and applications.

Easily upgradable

- Incremental parallel upgrades minimize downtime.

○ Key functionalities to consider in an information management platform

CAPTURE

ENTERPRISE CONTENT MANAGEMENT (ECM)

BUSINESS PROCESS MANAGEMENT (BPM)

CASE MANAGEMENT

CLOUD-BASED SHARING



8

The power of one.

How do the best cities manage to grow and evolve while maintaining the spirit and function that define them?

Urban planners put a lot of thought into the best way to keep a city's fidelity and reduce sprawl while taking into account inevitable growth and change. The key is to follow a single set of guiding principles that honors the past, present and future.

One standard of urban planning is the creation of "complete communities." The idea is the most resilient neighborhoods provide access to daily needs within a relatively small radius. In this way, residents can easily access shops and recreational spaces without traveling too far from home.

By the same notion, users benefit from access to a central information hub, where they can easily pull the data and documents they need while working in their existing enterprise or business application. This central information hub should

also enable an instantaneous, guaranteed exchange of data among all systems, serving as a single platform for enterprise information and connecting all applications automatically.

Unfortunately, many organizations depend instead on a vast array of disconnected applications with overlapping functionality and no automated exchange of data. Take, for example, enterprise content management (ECM) functionality. According to a 2015 Gartner report,⁵ many organizations have more than six different ECM products in place, and large organizations can have up to 20. The alternative? A unified information management platform that provides ECM and other key functionalities built on one

consistent architecture and designed to work seamlessly together.

How many information management platforms does an organization need? Just one, if it's the right one.

One platform enables you to architect an environment that reduces the pressure on your IT teams. Instead of managing and integrating many disconnected systems, your department is focused on building applications and solutions on a common infrastructure, created around a single content repository. So, ultimately, you can simplify processes, lower overhead costs and improve customer service.

"How many information management platforms does an organization need? Just one, if it's the right one."



To learn more about how urban planning principles can mitigate IT sprawl in your organization, contact us at www.kiriworks.com or 800.242.1777

Sources:

- ¹ Thomas Abbot, Rejeet Mathews, Tejas Pande and Robin King, "Why planning for expansion helps build sustainable, equitable cities," April 6, 2015, The City Fix, <http://thecityfix.com/blog/planning-urban-expansion-sustainable-equitable-cities-thomas-abbot-rejeet-mathews-tejas-pande-robin-king>.
- ² Raj Chetty and Nathaniel Hendren, "The Impacts of Neighborhoods on Intergenerational Mobility," April 2015, Harvard University, http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/images/nbhds_exec_summary.pdf.
- ³ "The 20 Best and Worst Cities for Public Transit," March 12, 2011, TIME, http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2070992_2071052_2070981,00.html.
- ⁴ Nick Robins-Early, "10 Cities That Are Shaping the Future of Urban Living," May 11, 2015, The Huffington Post, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/11/future-cities-urban-planning_n_7222018.html.
- ⁵ "Strategic Road Map for Enterprise Content Management," Gartner, 2015.