

Information Technology

FLGISA Technology Achievement Award Application

Innovative Use of Technology to Service the Public

Connecting Communities: Harnessing Technology for Enhanced Civic Engagement

City of Tamarac

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Connecting Communities: Harnessing Technology for Enhanced Civic Engagement

Summary

Looking for ways to enhance customer interactions, the City continually and actively searches out new and improved ways to do business and to engage our customers. During the past year, the City of Tamarac has introduced Tamarac TV, Tamarac Radio, Mobile Apps and Services, Smart Home Amazon Alexa Skills, and a new omni-channel call center solution based on Amazon Connect which has improved processes, increased efficiencies, and provided easier means for residents and businesses to obtain information, and to communicate with the City.

Background

In the City of Tamarac, technology is one of the key components in the efficient delivery of City services. We are committed to our vision of 'Excellence Always', and to continually improving the lives of our residents, businesses and employees. Looking for ways to enhance customer interactions, the City continually and actively searches out new and improved ways to do business and to engage our customers.

Aligned with our motto 'Customer Service, Second to None', in 2023, the City deployed several new methods for customers to obtain information, and to interact with the City:

- Tamarac TV <https://www.tamarac.org/TamaracTV>
- Tamarac Radio <https://www.tamarac.org/TamaracRadio>
- Mobile Apps and Services <https://www.tamarac.org/Apps>
- Amazon Alexa Skills <https://www.tamarac.org/AmazonAlexa>
- Amazon (AWS) Connect Omni-Channel Call Center

Tamarac TV

Tamarac TV is the official news channel for the City of Tamarac, Florida, featuring City Commission meetings, news and announcements, upcoming event information as well as emergency alert information.

Tamarac TV is accessible on streaming devices, smart TVs, web (tamaractv.org) and more.

Smart TV apps include Amazon Fire TV, Roku, and Apple TV (with Android TV planned for release in the next few months).

Tamarac Radio

Tamarac Radio is the official radio station for the City of Tamarac, Florida, featuring City Commission meetings, news and announcements, upcoming event information as well as emergency alert information.

Tamarac Radio is accessible via web, Apple IOS App, Google Android App, and as an Alexa Skill as well as through multiple streaming services such as iHeart Radio. Tamarac Radio can also be streamed via Apple Car Play and Android Auto.

All audio content (meetings, advertisements, highlights, etc.) played via Tamarac TV is also automatically played on Tamarac Radio.

Mobile Apps and Services

In order to better organize and help citizens identify the various applications and services, and the channels in which they can be accessed, a portal page was created showing all available apps, services and channels (how to access). This portal page provides detailed instructions on how to access, install/download, and utilize applications and services.

Amazon Alexa Skills

As more and more residents adopt smart home technologies, the City of Tamarac endeavored to create an Amazon Alexa Skill. The City partnered with a developer, USAN, to create the City's new Alexa Skill, which makes it easy for residents to learn about the City, have immediate access to news, events, and other important information, and to easily connect with City departments or to pay their water bill.

The [Alexa Skill](#) allows residents to obtain information about upcoming events (automatically retrieved from the City's website calendar/RSS feed), initiate conference calls (by phone) to City departments and additionally, and automatically, relay any emergency alerts from the City's website (alert module/RSS feed) directly to the Alexa smart home devices (Echo Dot and Echo Show will light up and alert whenever there is a new emergency alert i.e. hurricane, etc.). The City is currently in the process of enhancing this skill even further to integrate Amazon Bedrock Artificial Intelligence (AI) so that the Skill can soon respond to any question based on any publicly available information on the City's website.

The City also separately deployed a new [Amazon Alexa Flash Briefing Skill](#), which enables residents to obtain City news and event information as part of their [daily flash news briefing](#). Information is directly, and automatically provided/updated from the City's various RSS feeds (for news, calendars, emergency alerts, etc.).

Amazon (AWS) Connect Omni-Channel Call Center

The City of Tamarac has utilized Cisco's Contact Center Express application for 10+ years to handle calls into Customer Service (Utility Billing), Parks, Transportation and Building. Cisco's call center software is dated and currently can only handle voice calls. Aligned with the City's vision to expand our customer engagement / capabilities, the City has begun migrating to a new Omni-Channel Call Center Solution, called Amazon Connect.

Amazon Connect is an Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud-based customer call center service. Amazon Connect enables customer service representatives to respond to phone calls, SMS text messages, web-based chat and video chats, Facebook messages, Twitter (X) messages (and more).

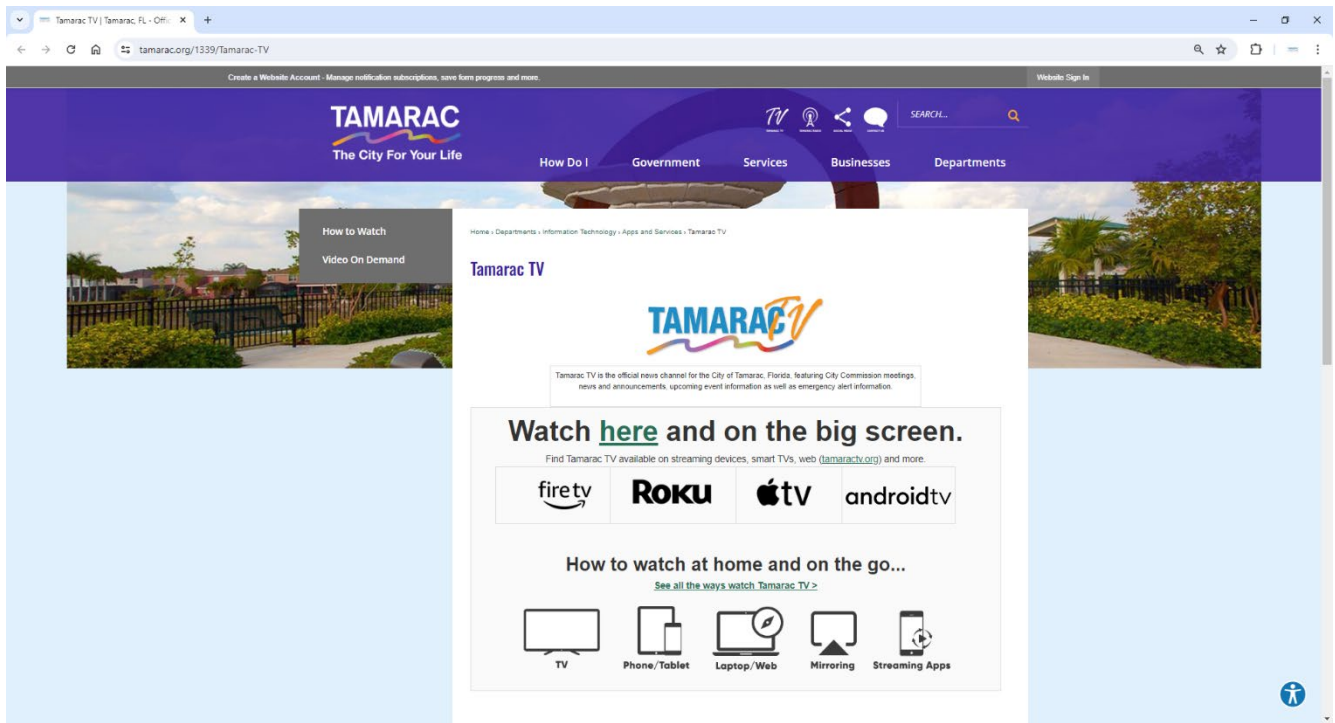
Amazon Connect provides many features and benefits, with only just a few highlighted below.

- Omni-channel experience
 - Voice
 - SMS Text Message
 - Web chat (from City's website)
 - Video (via web chat)
- Multiple languages supported (automated translation) for voice prompts and virtual agent.
- Emergency Alerts pulled/played/translated directly from the City website Alert Center.
- Virtual Agent (through the use of Amazon Bedrock Artificial Intelligence (AI), uses any public information available on the City's website to respond to customer questions).
- Customer Profiles (customer data retrieved from ERP available to customer service agents).
- Amazon Q (which leverages Bedrock AI) provides customer service agents with suggested responses/information using any public information available on the City's website, and more if desired.
- Call Queues / Call Statistics / Allow customers to select automatic callbacks while maintaining their place in line.
- Analytics / Insights.
- Post Call Surveys

All the above are examples of how we aim to make Tamarac Shine and to move Tamarac to the next level in customer engagement.

Tamarac TV

<https://www.tamarac.org/TamaracTV>



TAMARAC TV
City of Tamarac, Florida
Monday, April 29, 2024
3:09 PM

Humidity

Weather Forecast: **81°F** scattered clouds

Wednesday: 81°F - 72°F
Thursday: 80°F - 73°F
Friday: 80°F - 73°F

City of Tamarac - Upcoming Events

Public Art Committee Meeting
Event date: March 19, 2024 Event Time: 04:30 PM - 05:30 PM Location: 7520 N.W. 98th Avenue Room 204 Tamarac, FL 33321

VITA FREE TAX RETURN PREPARATION
Event date: March 19, 2024 Event Time: 06:00 PM - 08:00 PM Location: 7501 N. University Dr. Tamarac, FL 33321

VITA FREE TAX RETURN PREPARATION
Event date: March 20, 2024 Event Time: 12:00 PM - 06:00 PM Location: 8601 W. Commercial Blvd. Tamarac, FL 33321

Special Magistrate/Abatement Hearing
Event date: March 20, 2024 Event Time: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Location: 8601 W. Commercial Blvd. Tamarac, FL 33321

Visit Us Online @ Tamarac.org

News statement on settlement | McCarthy slows Biden in handling of US debt | Democrats seek Justice Clarence Thomas but their plan to investigate ethics allegations is unclear | Maine oustout

WATCH ON TV | WEATHER | TRAFFIC | SPORTS | EVENTS | VIDEO ON DEMAND | SOCIAL MEDIA | HELP

Live Streams

TAMARAC TV

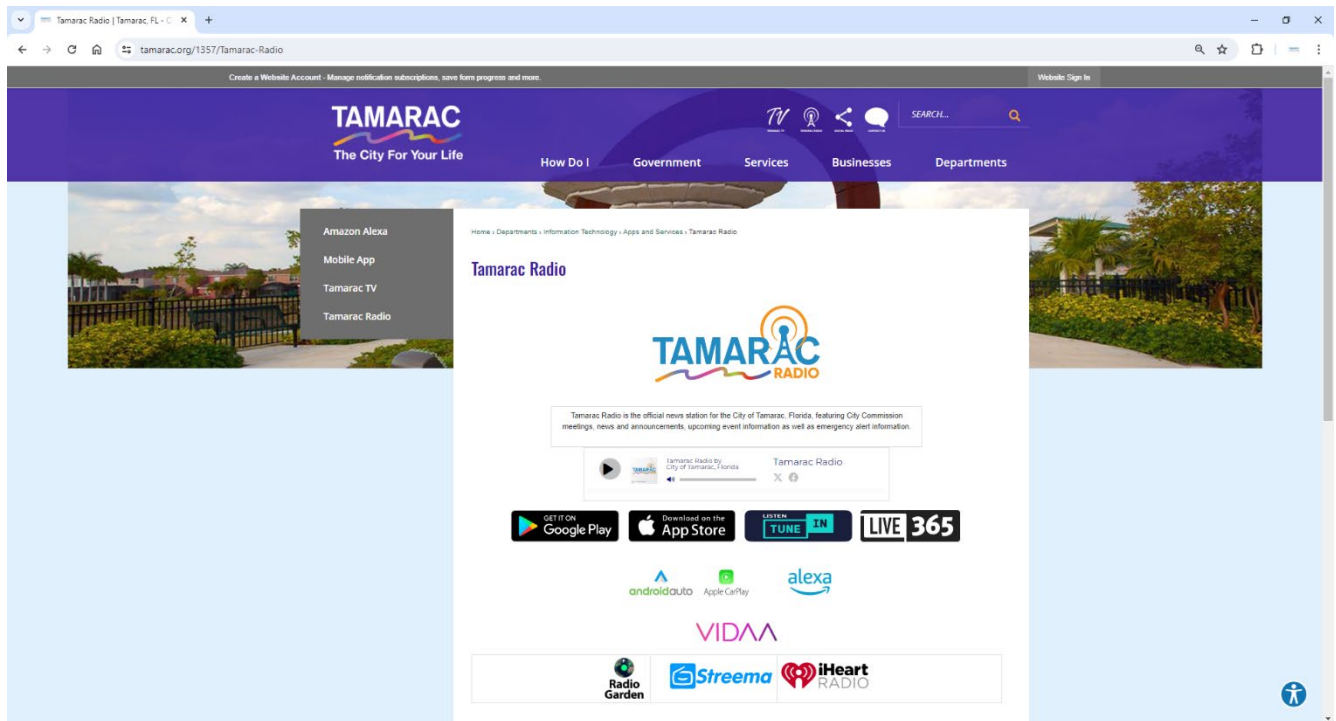
LIVE

Tamarac TV
Wednesday, Dec 27, 2023, 01:05 PM

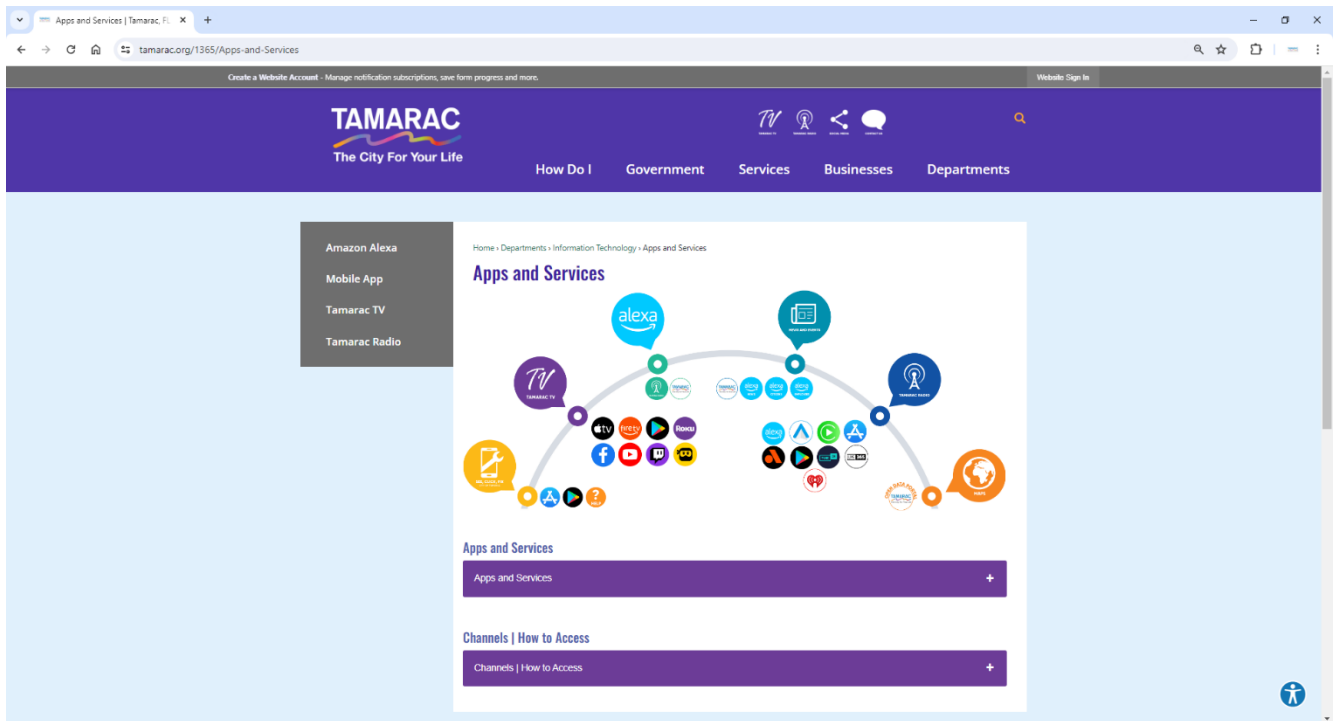
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Tamarac Radio

<https://www.tamarac.org/TamaracRadio>



Mobile Apps and Services <https://www.tamarac.org/Apps>



Amazon Alexa Skills

<https://www.tamarac.org/AmazonAlexa>

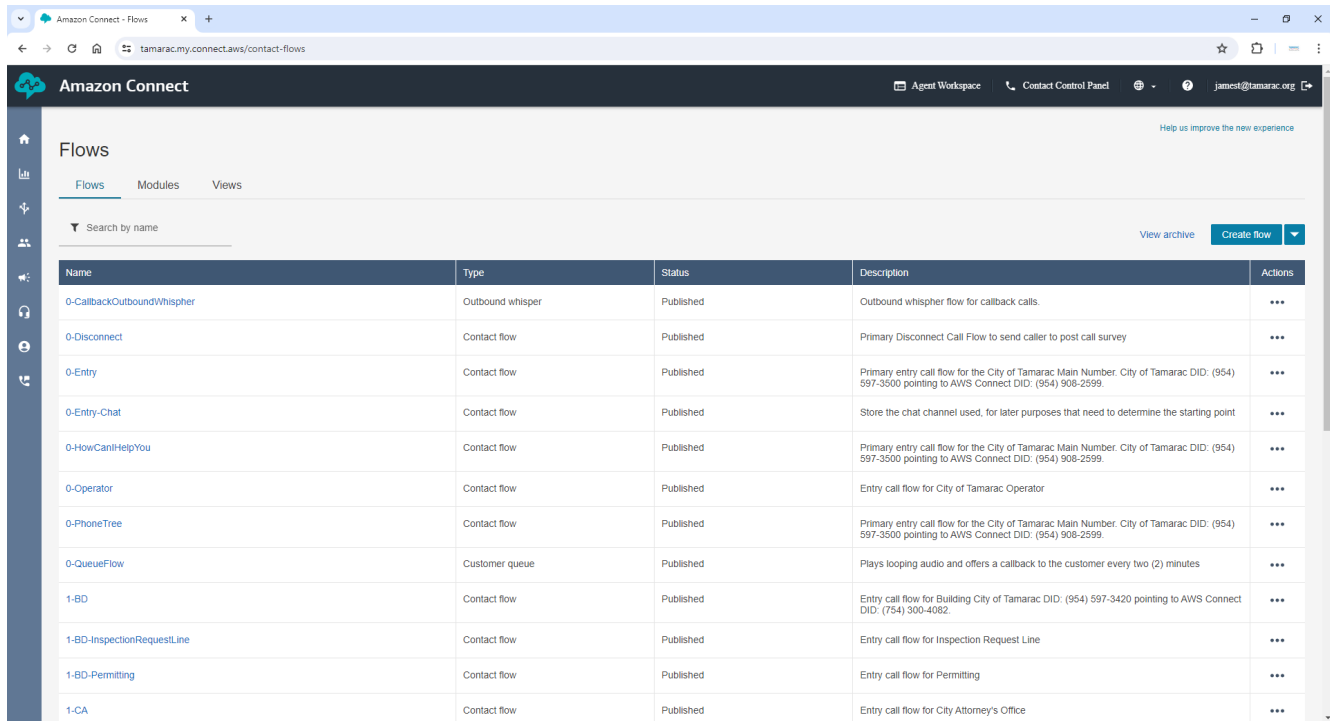
The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Tamarac website's page for the Amazon Alexa skill. The browser's address bar shows the URL [tamarac.org/1361/Amazon-Alexa](https://www.tamarac.org/1361/Amazon-Alexa). The website's header features the Tamarac logo with the tagline "The City For Your Life" and a navigation menu with links for "How Do I", "Government", "Services", "Businesses", and "Departments". A search bar is also present. A sidebar on the left lists "Amazon Alexa", "Mobile App", "Tamarac TV", and "Tamarac Radio". The main content area is titled "Amazon Alexa" and includes a breadcrumb trail: "Home > Departments > Information Technology > Apps and Services > Amazon Alexa". The central graphic features the Alexa logo, the text "Explore Tamarac Like Never Before with Our New Alexa Skill!!", a speech bubble saying "Alexa, Open City of Tamarac", and an image of an Amazon Echo device. Below the graphic, the text reads "Explore Tamarac with Our Alexa Skill!" and "Welcome to the City of Tamarac's official Alexa Skill! Stay connected with our community, access important information, and discover local events and services right from your Alexa-enabled device. Follow these simple steps to download and install our skill today." A section titled "How to Download and Install:" is partially visible at the bottom.

Amazon (AWS) Connect Omni-Channel Call Center

City Main Number (Voice): (954) 908-2599

Transportation Main Number (Voice): (954) 417-6764

SMS Text Messaging (Text): (866) 311-8815



The screenshot shows the Amazon Connect console interface. The main content area displays a table of flows. The table has columns for Name, Type, Status, Description, and Actions. The flows listed include various call and chat flows, such as '0-CallbackOutboundWhisperer', '0-Disconnect', '0-Entry', '0-Entry-Chat', '0-HowCanIHelpYou', '0-Operator', '0-PhoneTree', '0-QueueFlow', '1-BD', '1-BD-InspectionRequestLine', '1-BD-Permitting', and '1-CA'. All flows are currently in a 'Published' status.

Name	Type	Status	Description	Actions
0-CallbackOutboundWhisperer	Outbound whisper	Published	Outbound whisper flow for callback calls.	...
0-Disconnect	Contact flow	Published	Primary Disconnect Call Flow to send caller to post call survey	...
0-Entry	Contact flow	Published	Primary entry call flow for the City of Tamarac Main Number. City of Tamarac DID: (954) 597-3500 pointing to AWS Connect DID: (954) 908-2599.	...
0-Entry-Chat	Contact flow	Published	Store the chat channel used, for later purposes that need to determine the starting point	...
0-HowCanIHelpYou	Contact flow	Published	Primary entry call flow for the City of Tamarac Main Number. City of Tamarac DID: (954) 597-3500 pointing to AWS Connect DID: (954) 908-2599.	...
0-Operator	Contact flow	Published	Entry call flow for City of Tamarac Operator	...
0-PhoneTree	Contact flow	Published	Primary entry call flow for the City of Tamarac Main Number. City of Tamarac DID: (954) 597-3500 pointing to AWS Connect DID: (954) 908-2599.	...
0-QueueFlow	Customer queue	Published	Plays looping audio and offers a callback to the customer every two (2) minutes	...
1-BD	Contact flow	Published	Entry call flow for Building City of Tamarac DID: (954) 597-3420 pointing to AWS Connect DID: (754) 300-4082.	...
1-BD-InspectionRequestLine	Contact flow	Published	Entry call flow for Inspection Request Line	...
1-BD-Permitting	Contact flow	Published	Entry call flow for Permitting	...
1-CA	Contact flow	Published	Entry call flow for City Attorney's Office	...

