



CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

How the Town of Gilbert kept security ahead of rapid municipal growth

As services expanded to support more than 277,000 residents, Sophos MDR helped the town move beyond reactive security with continuous monitoring, proactive threat hunting, and expert-led response



Industry
Local Government

Sophos Solutions
Sophos Managed Detection
and Response (MDR)

About the Town of Gilbert

The Town of Gilbert has experienced tremendous growth over the past decade, becoming the fifth-largest municipality in the state of Arizona with a population topping 277,000 people.

Meeting the needs of this expanding population has required a major increase in services, and with it, the need to evolve the town's security strategy. Tony Bryson, CISO for the Town of Gilbert, realized the municipality's approach to security needed to change.

"We compare ourselves to operating like a small enterprise business where much of our technology and security support was handled manually with a limited team," Bryson said. "With limited resources, we were very reactive in how we handled IT and security initiatives. We went out and we found a solution to address the problem, rather than being more strategic and focusing on solutions that could have broader impact long term."

The challenges

- Struggled to scale services in pace with rapidly growing municipality.
- Lacked holistic visibility and monitoring across various security tools.
- Needed to implement a strategic security approach.

The Town of Gilbert had implemented various point solutions from multiple vendors to improve security over time. However, with cyber threats on the rise and a limited team, Bryson was interested in a more holistic solution that could pull these point solutions together to give greater visibility around where threats could be lingering to enable rapid response. This led Bryson to explore investing in XDR that could unify his view across specific point solutions and maximize his current investments. He found what he needed in Sophos Managed Detection and Response (MDR).

The solution

- Superior real-time threat detection and proactive response across IT and security technology.
- Collaboration with security experts on threat investigations.
- Monthly threat hunting to discover stealthy threats.

Sophos MDR delivers around-the-clock monitoring and threat detection giving customers the peace of mind that a powerful, experienced SOC is monitoring their environment 24/7 and responding quickly to avoid breach.

"Sophos acts as a force multiplier for us. To get this type of work we get from Sophos MDR, it would take us eight to a dozen bodies internally. For us, that's a massive savings in workforce costs."

Tony Bryson
CISO, Town of Gilbert

“The real-time monitoring is a very important thing that we could get, but I would say what really made us make the jump was the fact we would actually get real-time mitigation strategies that could be implemented,” Bryson said. “We can work with the Sophos SOC to identify which playbooks get enacted, and what mitigation strategies Sophos can take on our behalf.”

In addition, Sophos MDR also includes incident response services if a breach does occur, proactive monthly threat hunts by experienced threat hunters proactively looking for issues, and threat intelligence for insights of the state of the threat with regular, timely updates. The value added services that surrounded MDR helped separate Sophos from other managed vendors that didn’t include this level of expertise.

As part of Sophos Fusion, Sophos MDR brings together data from the Town of Gilbert’s existing security technologies across endpoint, network, cloud, identity, and business systems. Sophos analysts use this context to identify and prioritize potential threats, helping the town’s small team focus on the activity that poses the greatest risk.

The team can review the same alerts and investigation details as Sophos analysts, collaborate directly with experts, and access reporting that helps it better understand and manage risk across the municipality.

Results and impact

- Around-the-clock threat monitoring and threat detection.
- Threat hunting delivered from same provider as part of solution.
- Augment small internal team via real-time collaboration with security experts.

Bryson says that he “no longer sleeps with one eye open” with Sophos MDR in place, thanks to the solution’s superior detection and unmatched response. When Sophos detects a high or critical security threats, Sophos security analysts investigate the threat. All actions tied to an investigation are visible to Bryson and his team within the platform, and the openness and transparency keeps them secure and confident in their overall risk posture.

“We have a very small team supporting our municipality,” Bryson said. “We are able to keep our town safe from cyber threats with a small team because of the additional scale and support that Sophos gives us. Sophos MDR is a force multiplier for us. For us to get this type of coverage and support without Sophos MDR, we would have to add eight to a dozen experienced security resources internally. For us, that’s a massive savings in workforce costs while increasing our level of security.”

One of the key benefits for Bryson is the monthly threat hunt, proactively performed by Sophos experts. He said the inclusion of threat hunting added extreme value, as this was an activity his team did not have time to execute on its own, and lacked the experience that a dedicated team doing over 50,000 threat hunts a year can provide.

“Working with Sophos leveraging their XDR platform and expertise through their MDR offering has been a phenomenal experience. The value we receive from Sophos is high.”

Tony Bryson
CISO, Town of Gilbert

“We needed to find a better way to implement proactive security measures, not just reactive,” Bryson said. “The fact that we were able to get threat hunting as part of the solution, and not have to go invest in a different third-party service to perform the proactive threat hunts, increases the value of Sophos going beyond just a monitoring service.”

Bryson and the Town of Gilbert believe Sophos MDR not only makes them more secure, but increases their own internal security expertise with the open communication and knowledge sharing between his team and Sophos experts.

“Sophos proactively points out areas of weakness in our security posture and advises how we can quickly address to reduce our risk,” Bryson said. “Working with Sophos leveraging their XDR platform and expertise through their MDR offering has been a phenomenal experience. The value we receive from Sophos is high.”

Looking ahead

That relationship continues growing as the Town of Gilbert works with Sophos to develop proactive response playbooks, enabling our global cybersecurity experts to perform agreed-upon response actions to stop threats without first contacting Bryson and his team. Bryson said the communication and level of trust between his team and Sophos is appreciated, and he views Sophos MDR as a best-of-breed solution.

“To engage with Sophos was the next logical step for us, and they have really become a foundational pillar of our information security program. We are invested with Sophos because Sophos is invested in the Town of Gilbert. It truly is a partnership.”

“The fact that we were able to get threat hunting as part of the solution, and not have to go invest in another third-party service to do these particular threat hunts, adds so much value for us.”

Tony Bryson

CISO, Town of Gilbert

To learn more visit [Sophos.com](https://www.sophos.com)

© Copyright 2025. Sophos Ltd. All rights reserved.
Registered in England and Wales No. 2096520, The Pentagon, Abingdon Science Park, Abingdon, OX14 3YP, UK
Sophos is the registered trademark of Sophos Ltd. All other product and company names mentioned are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. (11-2025)

