



City of Abbotsford **DIGITAL STRATEGY**

June 2022





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Executive Summary

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The Opportunity

Today we are firmly in the digital age, a time where internet access and the smartphone have become near ubiquitous, and where most people choose to bank and shop, get their entertainment, navigate, connect, and communicate online in ways that fit into their busy lives.

Our community's average age is thirty-nine, and 57% of the population are under forty. 94% of Abbotsfordians are online, more than 76% own a smartphone and 88% bank online.

Unsurprisingly then community digital expectations are high, community members want the City to deliver more services digitally and experience during the pandemic has shown that between 70 - 80% of customers will use the digital services we provide.

So, the digital opportunity is for us to provide all City services in ways that match our community's expectations - leveraging technology to deliver services that are convenient and easy to use, and that are efficient and easy to operate by staff.

The Challenge

Our flooding and pandemic responses have shown just how fast we can use and apply technology to transition to working remotely, to respond to emergency needs, and to reconfigure our services to be delivered via email and online.

This highlights some of our strengths and is a positive place from which to build; but a current state assessment of our digital capabilities and our Digital Maturity tells us that there are some key challenges that stand in the way of our ability to fully meet the digital opportunity head on.

We have significant work ahead – work that cannot be delayed or avoided if we want to take advantage of the great digital opportunity in front of us.

The Strategy

The Digital Strategy is a strategy for delivering better services for the Citizens of Abbotsford in the digital age.

It provides a framework to align people, processes, data, and technology required to achieve digital service transformation. The result will be a seamless, customized experience for our residents – whether they prefer digital only, want to talk to us or come in.

Our Commitment to Digital

With this strategy we make a commitment to digital and clearly state our preference for digital service delivery over delivery via other channels (face to face, phone, mail). We prefer digital and we prefer self-service. We intend to move as many of our services (both customer facing and internal) to the digital channel as we can over the coming years, while preserving traditional channels for those customers that prefer to use them.

Our goal is that 100% of our customer facing services that can be made available for customers to self-serve, 24x7x365, will be. Whether they are finding information, registering, reporting, requesting, applying, booking, paying, checking, or submitting – they will be provided with a complete digital service to do it.

Nonetheless, we know there are many in our community that do not and will not use digital services. So, we are also committed to continuing to offer all services to the community face-to-face, on the phone as well as via our digital channels. Our preference for digital service does not undermine our commitment to deliver high quality services to all members of our community. We will also explore how we can break down barriers for those that cannot get online.

Building a Good Digital Service

As we build new services and revamp existing ones, we build recognizing that a good digital service must:

- 1 Be easy to find
- 2 Clearly explain its purpose
- 3 Set the expectations a user has
- 4 Enable users to complete outcomes
- 5 Work in a way that is familiar
- 6 Require no prior knowledge to use
- 7 Be agnostic to organizational structures
- 8 Require few steps to complete
- 9 Be consistent throughout
- 10 Be useable by everyone equally
- 11 Have no dead ends
- 12 Encourage correct behaviours
- 13 Respond to change quickly
- 14 Clearly explain decisions
- 15 Make it easy to get human assistance

The Value and Importance of Process Digitization

We also recognize that we cannot offer digital services if the processes that are staff use are not digitized.

The best run organizations rely on a combination of people, processes, and technology, working together in a synchronized fashion, to deliver exceptional services to customers.

When processes are digitized, all necessary transaction processing–workflows and tasks, notifications and quality checks, validations, and approvals–can be carried out digitally, using a computer and can happen anywhere and anytime.

Offline steps related to tracking and planning of work activity (e.g., manual interventions such as updating or checking a paper file or getting a physical signature) are removed. Common business solution platforms integrated in ways that allow tasks initiated or completed in one team or one system to automatically trigger a task for another team to be completed in another system.

The digital process chain provides complete visibility and the ability to audit the process throughout the organization. For example, an authorized member of staff can easily check on an assets' work history, review a job plan, review previous actions, or find out the required information, all within one comprehensive system.

Systems can manage the workflow of processes and the assignment of activities, including escalating items to senior staff and management when exceptions are encountered or where performance falls below defined levels of service.

Digitization allows the tracking of team and workgroup processes and monitoring of key performance indicators (KPIs) that provide insights to improve process effectiveness, allowing for a more effective allocation of organization resources.



So, a big part of the Digital Strategy is about digitization of our important processes and workflows.




Anticipated Benefits

Through the execution of the strategy the City anticipates a range of benefits, including:

- ✓ Increased staff efficiency and productivity resulting in the more cost-effective service delivery to citizens
- ✓ An increased ability to meet raised customer expectations and deliver enhanced customer experiences
- ✓ Reduced staff frustration & improved recruitment and retention (by providing a flexible, modern workplace)
- ✓ Improved community branding and economic development opportunities (intelligent / digital community)

But, at the core of the digital opportunity is the fact that delivering services digitally can be a significantly more cost effective for the City and taxpayers.

Cost per Transaction (Service Canada)

 Web / Online	\$0.10
 Phone	\$4.00
 Face to Face	\$6.50

As such, we plan to drive our most used services online as a priority.

The Work Ahead

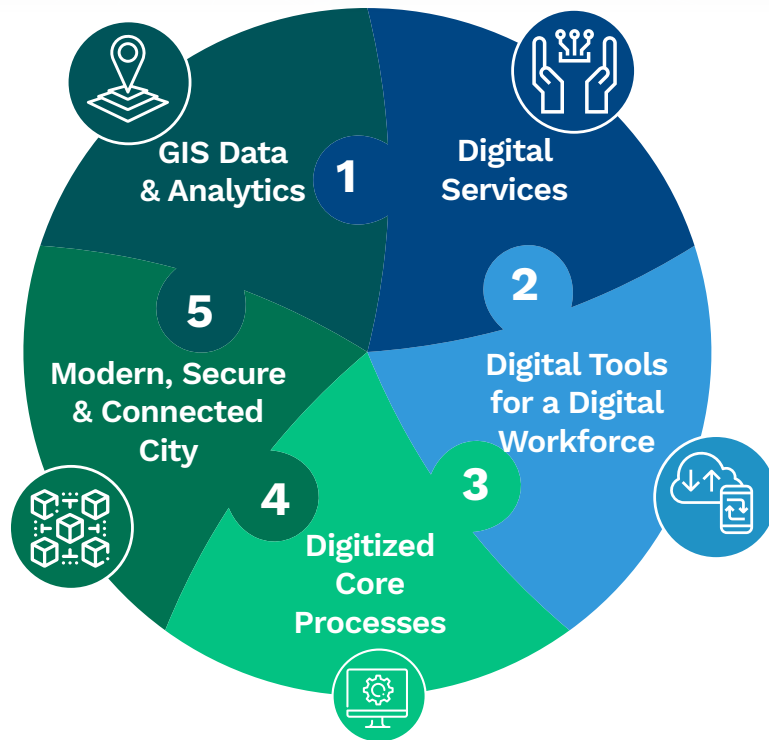
To capitalize on the digital opportunity, we aim to build a strong digital culture at Abbotsford where we innovate and are well positioned to deliver on our Digital ambitions. This requires an institutional level change in mindset and approach to service delivery and a commitment from leadership to invest in people to drive this work forward.

We will build our digital culture by;

- ✓ Establishing clear digital priorities through a new digital governance model.
- ✓ Investing in digital and data education and training.
- ✓ Investing in business process and service design capabilities.
- ✓ Providing clear guidance around roles, responsibilities, and processes around service modernization.
- ✓ Committing sufficient resources to our digital change initiatives to make them successful.
- ✓ Focusing on hiring for digital aptitude.
- ✓ Empowering our teams to challenge the status quo.
- ✓ Celebrating and showcasing our digital successes.
- ✓ Building communities of practice to share knowledge.

5 Major Workstreams

We have identified five major workstreams with various actions to get us where we need to be.



Workstream

Key Activities

Digital Services

Providing great, self-service digital experiences to customers over visits or calls to City Hall is a top priority. We have secured funding for the D3 project to implement a demonstrator end-to-end digital service in planning and development.

- ✓ Digital Service Standard
- ✓ MyAbbotsford Portal
- ✓ Online Service Requests, Forms, Bookings
- ✓ Expanded payments
- ✓ Online Plan and Build services
- ✓ 30+ new end-to-end digital services

Digital Tools for a Digital Workforce

Connecting all staff, using technology to make staff working lives easier is central to ensuring that we have a productive and effective staff.

- ✓ Microsoft 365 – improved collaboration tools
- ✓ Expanded and improved mobile working (inspectors, etc.)
- ✓ Access to technology for non-office-based staff
- ✓ Upgraded telephony system



Digitized Core Processes

We plan to re-double our efforts around digitizing our core processes - with a focus around People and Money processes (HR and Finance), Planning, Permitting and Licensing processes, and Work and Asset Management processes.

- ✓ Multi-year SAP roadmap and enhancements program
- ✓ Land and property management systems expansion and enhancements
- ✓ Work Management system implementation



Modern, Secure and Connected City

Our push for increased digital service relies on effective connectivity throughout the City for staff and citizens, an embrace of the cloud, and ensuring our technology environments are secure.

- ✓ Citywide network strategy and Internet of Things strategy
- ✓ Community broadband needs assessment
- ✓ Expanded public Wi-Fi in civic locations
- ✓ Updated Cloud strategy
- ✓ Matured Cybersecurity program



GIS, Data and Analytics

We plan to become more data driven as an organization. This means using the data that we have to inform our decision making and future practices and working to improve and expand the data that collect to better support our objectives.

- ✓ GIS enhancements to public and internal services
- ✓ Data and Analytics strategy
- ✓ BI and dashboard demonstrator program
- ✓ Corporate data platform
- ✓ Data literacy program

Measuring Progress

Moving forward, we need to build momentum by beginning to action the work identified here. Each Workstream has a detailed Workplan identified. We plan to report regularly to SLT, and annually to Council, on progress against the strategy.

We have already started to move forward on key initiatives, such as the D3 project, and we are energized to deliver better services for the citizens of Abbotsford in the digital age.