



The Corporation of the Town of Milton

Report To: Council

From: Aaron Smit, Director, Information Technology

Date: September 12, 2022

Report No: CORS-061-22

Subject: Town of Milton Digital Strategy

Recommendation: THAT Council endorse the 2023-2027 Digital Strategy;

THAT Digital Strategy implementation initiatives will be subject to future budget approvals as necessary.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The creation of a new digital strategy was identified as a key priority within the 2020-2023 Council-Staff work plan.
- In August 2021, staff retained Blackline Consulting to support the development of a new information technology strategic plan for Milton.
- A comprehensive strategy development process was initiated that focused on data collection, surveys and interviews with staff, management and Members of Council to ensure Milton's digital future aligns to broader corporate priorities and focuses on enhancing customer service across the organization.
- The digital strategy includes 5 themes aimed at improving Milton's digital maturity and capabilities, with a series of initiatives aligned to each, along with established criteria for measuring success and the net overall positive impact to the Town as each initiative is implemented.
- The digital strategy will guide Milton's information technology investment and focus over the next five years, and has been designed to balance evaluation and progression with the flexibility needed to seize any opportunities that arise during this time period.

REPORT

Background

Milton's Council-Staff work plan is a road map for how the Town of Milton will continue to accommodate growth while ensuring financial sustainability for the organization and the community. Under the goal of "Service Innovation" for the 2020-2023 Council-Staff work plan, it was identified that the Town will need to continue to deliver services that address increased expectations and service requests while effectively managing the need for new investment. The creation of a new digital strategy was established as key priority within this term of Council as a means to support this achievement. This digital strategy will allow the organization to focus its resources and technology investments over the coming years to enable the Town to continue to deliver digital services in an effective manner and enhance customer service throughout the community.

The community continues to grow and mature as the fastest growing municipality in Ontario, and one of the fastest anywhere in Canada. To that end, the Town must ensure future investment in technology platforms is made in a manner that facilitates enhanced customer service offerings and a "digital by default" mode of operation in order to allow the organization to continue to keep pace with service expectations and demands from the community in a fiscally responsible manner. The Information Technology Division has played and will continue to play a key role in implementing and supporting technology solutions which enable digital processes and service delivery across the Town.

The development of this digital strategy was completed by the Information Technology Division with input from stakeholders across the organization. It was informed by key documents and strategies previously completed by the Town such as:

- Service Delivery Review 1 (2019)
- Service Delivery Review 2 (2020)
- Information Governance Strategy (2020)
- Council Staff Workplan (2020)
- Customer Service Strategy (2021)

Many of these previous documents and strategies recommend and/or infer the need and desire for technology and digital within the Town. It is important that the Town of Milton have in place a digital strategy which focuses and streamlines the work being done within the Information Technology Division and the Corporation as a whole to ensure a

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consistent approach to implementing digital solutions and enhancing internal and external customer service across all intake channels.

Discussion

In July of 2021, staff retained Blackline Consulting to support the development of a new Information Technology Strategic Plan (ITSP) for Milton. Aligned to the Service Innovation pillar of the Council-Staff workplan, the ITSP was to include key themes and identify future areas of focus in order to foster a digital-first mindset within the organization and promote enhanced, online customer-accessible means of interacting with Town services. Recognizing the interdependency between and the critical role the Information Technology Division plays in implementing, supporting and enhancing digital within the organization, the ITSP deliverables were combined with those of the digital strategy and henceforth became known as the Town's digital strategy throughout the project lifecycle.

The process to create the strategy was divided into three phases, including: 1. Stakeholder Engagement and Environment Review; 2. Current State Assessment and Analysis; 3. Strategy Development and Approval. Phase 1 included interviews with key stakeholders within the organization including Members of Council representing the community at large. The purpose of the interviews was to collect information on both current and future department and divisional priorities, challenges, opportunities and how digital technologies and solutions can best prepare the Town for the road ahead. A review of the Town's current information technology tools, applications, architecture, policies and practices also took place in order to help guide recommendations and initiatives creation to continue moving the Town towards a customer service-driven, digital by default mindset and capability. Phase 2 involved collating all of the data collected during the initial phase and assessing the organization's current capabilities and overall current digital maturity starting point from which to build atop of. A target digital future state was created. It was during this phase that 5 overall digital themes, accompanying initiatives and an updated vision for the digital strategy was synthesized. Phase 3 involved building out detailed steps for each of the individual initiatives along with an overall implementation roadmap predicated on existing divisional capabilities balanced with the overall priority and urgency of the initiatives in relation to one another.

The digital strategy includes 5 themes aimed at improving Milton's digital maturity and capabilities, with a series of initiatives aligned to each along with established criteria for

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measuring success and the net overall positive impact to the Town as each individual initiative is implemented.

1. Connecting the Community

The application of digital technologies can only be achieved when people have access to good connectivity.

2. Collaborative Platforms

Beyond connecting is collaborating. Access to internet is only one part of the requirement to help digitize services. The Town also needs to have in place and actively pursue/evolve technology to collaborate between departments, as well as with residents, visitors and businesses.

3. Digital Service Delivery

Digital by Default challenges the Town to offer as many services as possible digitally and that it is the preferred choice as it is easier, simpler and more convenient for residents and businesses.

4. Automation and Mobility

Automation will help the Town be more efficient with managing its growth, reducing the need for adding staff. Mobility will allow staff to spend more time in the field. It also enables residents to use self-services, reducing wait times and reliance on Town staff.

5. Data Analytics

While capturing and managing data is important, it is even more critical that it be useful. The tools are a starting point, but the skills and knowledge of staff is essential.

These themes are important because it will help ensure the Town is able to deliver efficient services, now and as it grows. They will also ensure the Town continues to focus its efforts on continually enhancing customer service across all service intake channels. For this strategy to succeed, Milton will need to ensure a constant focus on continuous customer service improvements and digital-first ways of conducting business across the organization. It will be vitally important for staff to collaborate internally and seek collective progression towards these common goals. The absence of an approved digital strategy within the Town will continue to yield investments in ad-hoc and fractured technology solutions that show improvements in only selective areas and services of the organization. These ad-hoc improvements may not sufficiently serve the long-term goal of the organization to enhance customer service across all intake channels and all facets of the organization.



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The digital strategy will guide Milton's information technology investment and organizational focus over coming years and has been designed to balance evaluation and progression with the flexibility needed to seize any new opportunities that arise during this time period. Implementing digital technologies and enhancing customer service is a continuous process that will extend well beyond the initial five year implementation timeline outlined in this strategy. The Town will work towards completion of the identified initiatives during the next five years and continuously investigate, evaluate and implement new opportunities beyond this mark as the Town grows, services expand and technology evolves. It is anticipated that a subset of the initiatives can be implemented within existing budgets using current internal resources and skillsets, however others will require net new investments in resources, expertise or technologies which will be brought forward as part of annual budgeting processes.

Financial Impact

Initial implementation of the digital strategy will be done within the existing division budget. Any future financial impacts, including service level adjustments or increases in resource requirements, will be brought forward for Council approval through the annual budget process. Staff will also continue to leverage other available sources of funding as a mechanism to supplement the approved operating budget.

Respectfully submitted,

Troy McHarg
Commissioner, Corporate Services

For questions, please contact: Aaron Smit Phone: Ext. 2317
Director, Information Technology

Attachments

Digital Strategy

Approved by CAO
Andrew M. Siltala
Chief Administrative Officer



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Recognition of Traditional Lands

The Town of Milton resides on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We also recognize the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee people. The Town of Milton shares this land and the responsibility for the water, food and resources. We stand as allies with the First Nations as stewards of these lands.