

DIGITALIZING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

KEY QUESTIONS FOR PURPOSEFUL TRANSFORMATION

A LOCAL GOVERNMENT'S GUIDE
TO FUTURE-READY TECHNOLOGY
THAT EMPOWERS CONSTITUENTS,
CONNECTS COMMUNITIES, AND
ACCELERATES DEVELOPMENT.



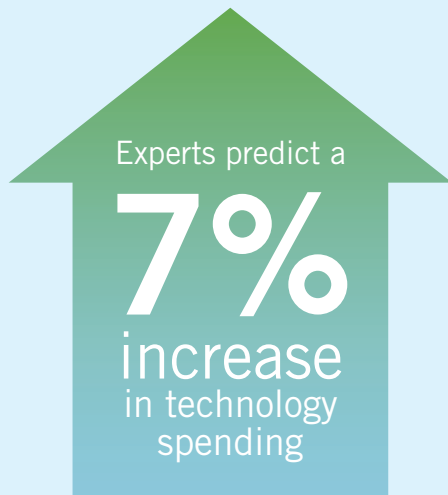
THE GREAT DIGITAL PIVOT

Across the globe, the COVID-19 pandemic has made one thing incredibly clear:

Digital government is more than possible — it can make operations more efficient, information and services more accessible, and communities more connected, both across departments *and* with the constituents they serve.

Community development has been no exception to the pandemic's digital pivot. Nationwide, local governments have swapped out paper-heavy, in-person processes for innovative virtual permitting and licensing solutions that have allowed them to continue driving development and engaging with constituents.

Yet, while COVID-19 may have accelerated the transition to digital infrastructure, according to a Gartner survey of government CIOs, even before the pandemic, in 2019, 45% of CIOs reported that their organization's digitalization initiatives were already maturing, compared to only 15% and 29% in 2017 and 2018, respectively.¹ Factoring in back-to-back federal relief packages in 2020 and 2021, it's no wonder that data from the Center for Digital Government (as cited in GovTech) predicts a 7% increase in technology spending for both state and local governments this year.²



2021
State and Local Governments



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Out of necessity, many local governments took an important leap toward digital transformation during the pandemic. However, in many cases, because this shift was reactive, it was quicker and less strategic than anticipated, leaving organizations wondering: “Where do we go from here?” and “How do we continue the digital journey?” This guide aims to help navigate that uncertainty.

By highlighting technology trends and raising key questions to consider when evaluating permitting and licensing solutions, this piece can help your local government make a purposeful transition to a stable, citizen-centric digital infrastructure that will not only serve today’s community development demands, but also allow you to scale for future growth and challenges.

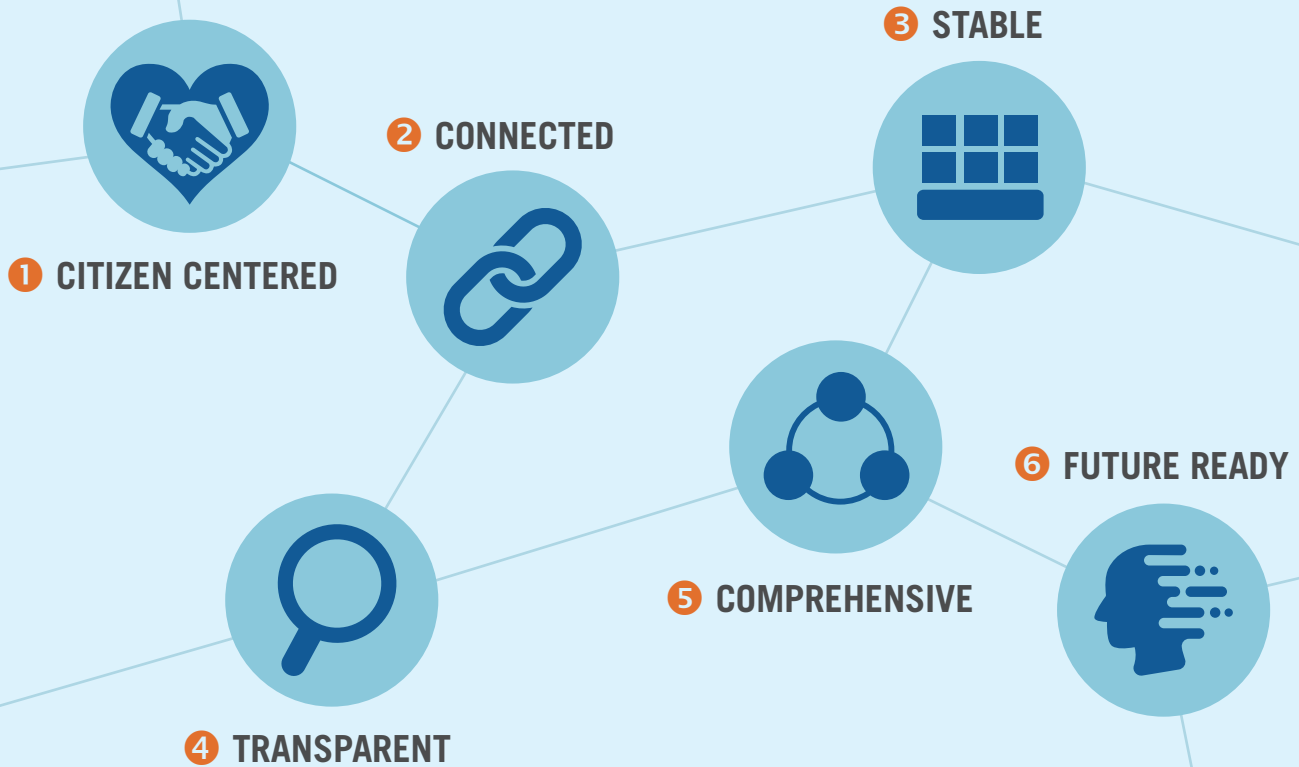
Make a purposeful transition
to a stable, citizen-centric
digital infrastructure



Local Governments

THE PATH TOWARD PURPOSEFUL TRANSFORMATION

No two local governments have the same starting point on their digital transformation journey. This guide isn't intended to define one right path, but rather, it's designed to help you chart your organization's own course by assessing your current technology strengths and identify opportunities in the following key areas within the community development industry.



Read on to learn more about each key trend or **click an icon** to jump to the area that interests you most.



CITIZEN CENTERED

While the demand for digital permitting and licensing services began rising well before the pandemic, COVID-19 has solidified constituents' expectations for self-service. In fact, Gartner predicts that by 2023, 60% of governments will have tripled virtual services for citizens.¹ And, not only does the self-service trend benefit constituents, by empowering your citizens, contractors, and developers to play a more active role in the development process, it can also alleviate pressure on your staff.

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SELF-SERVICE: NO LONGER A “NICE TO HAVE”

When evaluating software solutions, the ask is no longer simply: “Do you offer self-service technology?” The question has become: **“How is self-service built around my constituents’ needs?”** and **“How does it prioritize their digital experience?”**

Think Amazon. The customer can search, place an order, track shipments, compare products, ask questions, and view trends — all within one cohesive platform. Citizens have grown accustomed to this experience in all areas of business, including community development. Admittedly, applying for a building permit, for example, may seem more complex than online shopping. However, by asking your software vendor the right questions, you can make community development just as simple, transparent, and seamless.

THE KEY QUESTIONS

- What kind of virtual tools are offered to guide constituents through end-to-end permitting and licensing — from application to approval? Is guidance offered for complex processes, or only a handful of basic permit/license types?
- Is there one centralized portal for constituents and contractors, or are multiple portal logins required?
- Are virtual meetings, sessions, and inspections offered through self-service?
- How will constituents have transparency? Can they see the status of an application online, and will they receive notifications when it's their turn to complete a task?
- Does the self-service portal prioritize user experience design (UX)? What kind of UX testing has been done?
- Do digital services look and feel like one system or more like they're pieced together?
- What level of ADA compliance has been completed?



CONNECTED

From plan reviewers to inspectors (and everyone in between), when community development stakeholders are connected, everyone is more efficient and informed. By using one centralized platform with a consistent toolset, staff can work from the same shared data in real time, allowing for equal accountability and a level playing field.

THE KEY QUESTIONS

- How will the solution streamline day-to-day operations for your staff?
- Is there a different solution for each step or stakeholder in the process or can they use one central platform?
- How is data being shared among stakeholders? Is it updated in real time?
- What types of features are available to automate regulatory review processes? How does staff know when a task is assigned to them or if a new file has been submitted?

A CENTRALIZED FORMULA



CONSISTENCY IS KING

With a centralized permitting and licensing system that's managed consistently, it can be easier to identify bottlenecks to optimize both the sequence and speed of a given workflow. For example, rather than walking a paper set of plans for review from one office to another, a shared system can allow for concurrent review and automatically notify the next department when their turn is up.

In turn, a connected, automated process can mean your staff has more time to focus on their key responsibilities, rather than tracking down where they are in the process or hunting down the latest version of a document. Yet, "connected" is a broad term, and it's critical to evaluate a software partner's strength in that area.



STABLE

There's no room for error in local government. When mapping out your local government's digital transformation journey, it's important to ensure that both your software partner and the specific solutions you're considering can not only help you realize your goals, but also have a strong track record of success doing so.

THE "WHO, WHAT, WHEN, AND WHERE" MATTER

PROVEN TRACK RECORD

While a track record of successful implementations is important when evaluating technology, it's all in the details. If these implementations were not recent, or if they're all in the same region or among the same population size, it's hard to know if that success will carry over.

GROWTH THROUGH ADVERSITY

Beyond implementation, it's crucial to know if a vendor can remain strong through adversity. The pandemic is a perfect example. For those vendors who were able to weather the storm, consider if they continued to invest in product development and grow their business when faced with new challenges, or if they only had the resources to maintain the status quo.

FINANCIAL STABILITY

Lastly, don't forget to consider the stability of the financial partners a software vendor chooses. This can serve as an important clue for how well the vendor can weather future storms as well as what types of resources they have to continue investing in ongoing research and development.



Beyond

implementation, it's crucial to know if a vendor can remain strong through adversity.

THE KEY QUESTIONS

- Does the vendor have a strong history of successful implementations across the country? When, where, and what size population of communities do they serve?
- Can they provide client references?
- Do they have the support of best-in class financial partners?
- How do they handle adversity? Do they have the resources to continue investing in development through challenges?



THE KEY QUESTIONS

- What types of data toolsets does the software offer for staff, constituents, and leaders? Is it updated in real time?
- How do constituents access the data?
- How will the vendor present the data in a way that's actionable, and easy to use? Can they show you an example?
- Does the data highlight trends that can help you navigate future decisions and optimize processes?

TRANSPARENT

Gone are the days of clunky, locked spreadsheets with indecipherable development data. Today, local government staff, citizens, developers, contractors, and city leaders expect actionable, accessible insights.

FREE THE DATA

Giving your staff access to permitting and licensing data is a start, but the real value is when data is readily available in an easily digestible format. Rather than using valuable staff resources to pull together your data, they could use that time to dig into the data's findings to make decisions and optimize performance. That's why it's so important to team up with a software partner who offers out-of-the-box, native data toolsets that will do the heavy lifting for you.



Just as staff is coming to expect more of their development data, so too are citizens and city leaders. And, among these groups, the insights they're seeking are often different. While a developer or business owner might want to identify the best location for growth, an executive leader might want to know why the city's revenue goals are not being met, and a staff member might be looking for a workflow bottleneck. Consider software solutions that provide insights that can be easily tailored not only to your community's needs, but also to the various personas within that community.



COMPREHENSIVE

Is integration over? Not quite, but if the recent spike in gov tech acquisitions tells us anything, it's that a one-stop shop for public sector technology is growing in demand.³ Just as it's the responsibility of local government to ensure your community's physical architecture is built the right way, you should be able to lean on your technology provider to help build your digital architecture the right way — one that connects departments and your community.

AFTER THE DOORS ARE OPEN

Community development doesn't end when a building opens its doors, but it also shouldn't require a third-party integration to ensure that building stays open, safe, compliant, and that the surrounding infrastructure is stable. As digital transformations mature, local governments are realizing that a comprehensive civic services platform can not only increase efficiency organization-wide, but it can also maximize cross-departmental collaboration by dissolving silos.

Look for a software partner who can offer a complete solution for all areas of civic services — from community development and business management to asset management, citizen requests, environmental health, and fire prevention. With seamless products that share data and complement each other, your local government can be more agile and responsive to the ever-changing industry.



A one-stop shop for public sector technology is growing in demand.

THE KEY QUESTIONS

- Does the software vendor offer a true enterprise-wide solution? In addition to permitting and licensing technology, do they offer solutions to support your asset management, environmental health, and fire safety needs?
- How many third-party integrations will you require?
- Does the provider lead with API connections?
- Does the vendor provide nightly, flat file integrations? Or do they provide integrations in real time?



FUTURE READY

Just as this guide stresses the importance of digital transformation, you should expect the same future-forward momentum from your community development software.

CHANGE IS THE ONLY CONSTANT

Aspire to work with a future-ready technology partner who isn't simply reacting to industry changes, but one who is helping to drive the change. Five years down the road this could mean the difference between hearing "sure, we can integrate with that," or "yes, we have that"?

THE KEY QUESTIONS

- How much does the company invest into product development?
- How does the vendor interact with their customers after go-live? Do they actively listen to and implement feedback?
- Will new features require third-party integrations?
- Are product upgrades free to current customers? And if so, how is the customer informed of the latest functionality and how to take advantage?

BE MINDFUL

Innovation can come at a cost, literally. That's why it's important to consider not only what type of emphasis a software partner puts on future development, but also, if you will reap the benefits of the innovation for free or if there will be a cost associated.



¹ Di Maio, Andrea. (2021) Accelerate Digital for Future-Ready Government. Gartner. <https://www.gartner.com/en/publications/accelerate-digital-for-future-ready-government>

² Maruri, Katya. (2021) Here's the Technology Government Needs in 2021. GovTech. <https://www.govtech.com/budget-finance/heres-the-technology-government-needs-in-2021.html>

³ Cook, Jeff. (2021) Gov Tech Biz Quarterly Roundup: Q2 2021 With Jeff Cook. GovTech. <https://www.govtech.com/biz/gov-tech-biz-quarterly-roundup-q2-2021-with-jeff-cook>

TYLER TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

Tyler Technologies (NYSE: TYL) provides integrated software and technology services to the public sector. Tyler's end-to-end solutions empower local, state, and federal government entities to operate more efficiently and connect more transparently with their constituents and with each other.

By connecting data and processes across disparate systems, Tyler's solutions are transforming how clients gain actionable insights that solve problems in their communities. Tyler has more than 37,000 successful installations across more than 12,000 locations, with clients in all 50 states, Canada, the Caribbean, Australia, and other international locations.

Tyler was named to Government Technology's GovTech 100 list five times and has been recognized three times on Forbes' "Most Innovative Growth Companies" list. More information about Tyler Technologies, an S&P 500 company headquartered in Plano, Texas, can be found at tylertech.com.

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