



Standing Committee Report

REPORT NUMBER 014-2026-Corporate Services-Corporate Information Technology

DATE

PREPARED

December 15, 2025

FILE

STANDING

COMMITTEE

January 6, 2026

MEETING DATE

SUBJECT

Corporate Digital Strategy Progress Update (October 2024 – November 2025)

PURPOSE

For Information Only.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a progress update on initiatives which are included and/or support the Corporate Digital Strategy (the Strategy) and covers the period from October 2024 through November 2025.

The Strategy envisions a collaborative approach to delivering customer-centered, digitally-powered City Services. It includes recommendations and work streams that foster and support digital transformation for city services, improve employee workplace experiences, and increase operational efficiencies.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The Strategy provides the required framework to capitalize on opportunities to drive efficiencies throughout the organization, to increase staff productivity, and to gain insights into service delivery that will pinpoint areas for improvement.

In addition, the Strategy strives to better position the City to meet ever-growing customer expectations of high quality self-serve digital service offerings.

All areas of the Corporation are involved in the various digital transformation projects. In some cases, these projects were specifically recommended in the Corporate Digital Strategy, while in other cases they result from the Strategy's vision, objectives and goals, which promote a "digital first approach" to service delivery. Some projects are related to the functions of a particular business area, others may cross business areas,

and some are corporate-wide projects. In all cases, subject-matter experts from the business areas are required to help design digital services and processes, which adds strain on the limited resources available in those areas. In many cases, the same staff perform their day-to-day duties while working on these digital projects. It is important that careful planning is undertaken, and competing priorities are considered before committing to a new digital project.

The attached Digital Strategy Progress Update (October 2024 – November 2025) provides a detailed status report of the progress made over the last 13 months.

The following section provides a high-level summary and highlights of the progress to date:

Governance, Change Management and Operating Model - Progress update:

Given the importance of technology, its role in delivering City Services, and the many competing demands of the municipal setting, digital governance is required to ensure that the City is working on the right things, making sound technology and digital investments and aligning IT strategies with business goals. Although the City's governance is established, continuous review and improvement is required given rapid technological advancements, emerging business priorities and evolving cybersecurity and privacy considerations.

The progress update highlights four initiatives completed, three in progress and two planned to start within the next year related to this area.

During this reporting period additional work was done to improve the project intake and governance model, including inclusion of a benefit target and realization framework and development of a formalized privacy assessment process for digital initiatives. With the rapid development and adoption of Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) across organizations, a working group was formed to develop guidelines and procedures to aid the City's workforce with the use of Gen AI. The working group is also tasked with exploring and reviewing use cases that could help with digital workplace improvements and digital service delivery. Work is nearing completion on a Corporate Gen AI Procedure, and work is getting underway on review and identification of potential Gen AI use cases.

Digital Workplace and Digital Infrastructure Workstreams – Progress update:

The Digital Workplace and Digital Infrastructure workstreams identified in the Strategy emphasize the need for the City to use technology to connect all staff, simplify work activities, and ensure that adequate, secure network and Cloud capabilities are in place.

The progress update highlights eight initiatives completed, three in progress and three planned to start within the next year.

During this reporting period, several initiatives were completed including the implementation of enhanced cybersecurity incident detection and response services, Provincial Offences OPP e-ticket processing automation, a business case for automated water meter readings, and continued rollout of a corporate wide digital staff scheduling and attendance solution. Work is also underway on several items including accounts payable digitization and development of both corporate & departmental IT business continuity plans.

Digital Services and Digitized Business Processes Workstreams – Progress update:

The Digital Services and Digitized Business Processes workstreams identified in the Strategy highlight the importance and necessity in replacing paper-based, manual processes with automated, digital, real-time workflow-based processes to streamline operation and provide great, self-service digital experiences for citizens.

The progress update highlights eight initiatives completed, ten in progress and three planned to start within the next year.

During this reporting period, new services were brought online including the ability for Thunder Bay Transit Customers to use smart payment cards on buses and load/re-load these smart cards online. Also, a new water e-billing solution was launched allowing water account holders to go online to request their water bills via email. In addition, a new online boulevard garden registration system was introduced, and in support of the City's Smart Growth Action Plan, the ability to apply for Growth Community Improvement Plan (CIP) grants was also made available online through the City's website.

Work is underway on various initiatives including a new tax e-billing solution which will allow property owners to request their tax bills via email, implementation of a new Child Care Services online customer portal for payments and online account management. End-to-end digitization work for the Bylaw Licensing & Enforcement processes, including integration with the City's Property & Permitting portal is scheduled to begin in early 2026, as is the implementation of a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solution with customer portal to aid with work that is underway to offer a one-stop centralized customer service function.

GIS and Data Workstream – Progress update:

The Geographic Information System (GIS) and Data workstream stresses the need to enhance our GIS capabilities and promote the use of GIS throughout the organization to help manage work. Through a coordinated and standardized approach to expanding the use of GIS technologies and integration into business solutions, data analytics can be used to drive City operations, aid in informed decision making, and make it easier for citizens to interact and use the City's data.

The progress update highlights two initiatives completed, four in progress and two planned to start within the next year.

During this reporting period, an interactive road construction map was launched which allows citizens to get real-time and up-to-date road work and road closure information for projects underway. In addition, a neighbourhood services map was brought online which allows citizens to find and explore the nearest city services, facilities, and points of interest based on their selected location. Work is nearing completion on a “Where is my Snowplow” Interactive Map which will allow residents to see where snowplows are currently working, and which roads have been cleared.

Key Performance Indicators and Benefit Realization:

Through the work of the Information, Digital & Technology Governance (IDTG) committee, development of a comprehensive framework to measure the success, benefits and improvements related to digital initiatives continues to evolve and expand.

Some of the indicators and benefits realized or targeted for initiatives completed/currently underway for this reporting period are provided in the progress update, including:

- Six new citizen-facing digital services with citizen uptake, bringing the total number of new online digital service offerings to 18 since early 2023, with work underway on an additional 10 citizen facing services.
- Citizen & staff convenience, choice, satisfaction and transparency
- Cost savings
- Staff time savings, efficiencies and cost avoidance
- Increased revenue

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

There are no financial implications associated with this Corporate Digital Strategy Progress Update. Costs associated with implementation of the Corporate Digital Strategy will continue to be brought forward for Council consideration through the annual budget process.

BACKGROUND

A progress update on the Corporate Digital Strategy (May 2023 – September 2024) was provided, for information, at the Committee of the Whole meeting on October 28th, 2024 and is available at www.thunderbay.ca/digitalstrategy.

A progress update on the Corporate Digital Strategy (January 2022 – April 2023) was provided, for information, at the Committee of the Whole meeting on June 19th, 2023.

In January of 2021, a Request for Proposal was issued for consulting services related to the development of a Digital Strategy. The Perry Group Consulting was selected through that process and worked with the City to develop the Corporate Digital Strategy. The Corporate Digital Strategy (Report 160/2021) was approved by City Council on December 20, 2021.

The development of a Digital Strategy was recommended by Administration in Report 144/2020 (City of Thunder Bay Program and Service Review – Implementation) presented and approved at a special Committee of the Whole meeting on December 9, 2020. This report was a result of direction from City Council to report back after Report 79/2020, which provided the Grant Thornton Phase Two Report of the Program and Service Review, which identified a number of recommendations related to the use of Information Technology (IT) and the role of IT in transforming how both internal and external services could be more efficiently delivered.

REFERENCE MATERIAL ATTACHED

Attachment A – Corporate Digital Strategy Progress Update (October 2024 – November 2025)

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REPORT SIGNED AND VERIFIED BY

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12/17/2025 (MM/DD/YEAR)