



**DiscoTech: Discover Technology  
Digital Infrastructure Plan and Digital Autonomy  
Edited Transcript from Webex Event on June 21, 2021 at 2:30 p.m.**

OK, so recording has started.

And one final reminder then, is that we do have a colleague Alex, who is monitoring the chat today. So thank you for that, Alex. And with that, I'll hand it over to the Chief Technology Officer for the Land Acknowledgement. Thanks, Lawrence.

Thanks very much Alex. Truly appreciate that. Hello everybody. Good afternoon.

We acknowledge the land we are meeting on is the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit,

The Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Metis. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.

Today is National Indigenous Peoples Day.

It is the 25th anniversary of this annual recognition and celebration of the cultures and contributions of the indigenous peoples of Canada.

We would also like to take a moment to acknowledge the discovery of the unmarked burial site of 215 children at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School, and to recognize the scope of the trauma carried by Indigenous peoples who are our friends and colleagues. Today we are here to discuss the role of technology in society, and to look to the future of the type of place we want to live in. Reconciliation doesn't stop at the physical world.

It extends to our digital spaces and beyond.

With that in mind, I would like to give voice to the words of Alexander Dirksen, a member of the Metis Nation, who delivered these remarks at Queen's University in November 2018.

Alexander stated: "There is so much wisdom in these territories and in the peoples who have been stewards of them since time immemorial. As we hold space today for dialogue on digital spaces, which so often feel ephemeral and borderless, it is critical for us to reaffirm the centrality of, and our connection to, these physical territories upon which we gather.

Meaningful change, begins with recognition of technological innovation as a fundamental human endeavor.

Technology is not a neutral force nor are digital spaces safe spaces for all,

instead mirroring, replicating and at times exacerbating the real and pressing realities faced by Indigenous peoples and other marginalized communities in physical spaces.

A social justice lens must therefore be applied to all that we discuss,

design and develop in the digital realm.

Thank you. So, I would like to welcome everyone again and thank you today to meet with us.

For our first ever DiscoTech!

It is hard to put up the actual disco ball via virtual meeting we are today.

So we've settled for some graphics instead, and thank you to the team for putting together the graphics that you see. The term DiscoTech was coined by the Detroit Digital Justice Coalition.

We are adapting it as a fun way to refer to public meetings about technology.

To get and encourage people to be engaged and interested in this topic.

So, please look out for more DiscoTech's in the future and hope we will see you there soon.

I am very pleased here on behalf of my colleagues in the City,

to initiate a new discourse around technology.

The way it is designed, used, tended and acquired.

The issues around digital autonomy are complex and potentially controversial.

To give some insight into these complexities, we have staff here today from 3 different divisions and I would like to use this opportunity to thank those staff for being here on this journey with us.

Implementing digital autonomy will be disruptive and it will certainly take time.

But it is very important work that will help shape the City of Toronto going forward.

As you will see in the presentation today, we will use this as a complimentary to the existing principles established in the Digital Infrastructure

Plan, so that digital autonomy will become another pillar on which

the City can construct and consolidate a new technological model that is ethical responsible and civic.

Your participation today is important and extremely appreciated.

The turn out so far is very encouraging, and I also recognize there are tech sector, vendor community and various advocates and interested parties here today, who represent many perspective of the diversity of our community.

We will try our best to capture all the voices and views.

I would say that I do have another engagement towards the end of the session, but I will stay as long as time permits, and I will listen intently to what each of you have to say.

I want to thank you for taking out

time from your very, very busy schedules and away from other important activities to work with us in the City of Toronto on these issues.

With that I will hand it over to Alice who is the Manager of our Connected Community. Thank you.

Thank you very much Lawrence and thank you everyone for attending this afternoon. I wanted, I'd like to go through the agenda very briefly with you, so we're in the 1st section.

this is the welcome introductions and agenda overview and then we'll go right into a presentation with some polling questions for about 50 minutes.

then we will have a question and discussion period for another 50 minutes. Then we'll do our wrap up and some next steps as well.

So again, thank you so much for spending part of your afternoon with us. Really grateful for your participation. There are some questions in the chat already. I wanted to just direct you to the Q & A box in the bottom right.

If you're on a computer, if you're on a phone or tablet, there should be a dot dot dot around the bottom.

So, you can click on that if you want to connect with us, you know, we, as Lawrence said, there are many different, you know.

Voices and perspectives here, and we will try our best to

To answer as many questions as possible and, but another reminder is that private information will not be shared during the session. So please do not share any private information.

And, of course, any questions that we don't have time to address today, we will have an online feedback form that will be available fairly soon and for 2 weeks, and that, you can always reach us at [digitalfeedback@toronto.ca](mailto:digitalfeedback@toronto.ca)

We'll be using Slido as our, our engagement tool today and so I encourage you to open up another tab on your browser if you are on a tablet or a computer, or open up another browser on your phone to go to [slido.com](https://www.slido.com),

we'll be sharing with you the event code which is #discotech

I will show you the slide very soon when that question comes up and of course, you can use your phone tablet or smartphone to participate and we'll be using that.

We'll be using that going forward for the remainder of the next hour and a half. So, Alex has very, helpfully put the link in the chat.

So, you can just click on that if you want to participant in the polling, we definitely want you to. And if you're calling only and don't have access to the Internet right now. Don't worry.

We'll be sending out a survey after the event, and we'll make sure that we will be able to hear from you and gather your thoughts, so I'll pause now.

Okay, so there are a number of participants here. I see a question in the chat about you can't see the participants. We are going to do our best to make sure this meeting is as engaging and as

As engaging, as inclusive, as possible. But due to the format of the meeting we've set up today, you may not be able to see everyone and chat with each other.

You'll be able to though, ask questions to the panel.

So, thank you very much for your patience with that. So, a little bit about how the digital infrastructure plan came about. I wanted to tell you that, you know.

We see that digital infrastructure is changing the way that we access information as well as the way that municipalities deliver service.

So it can lead to a number of positive outcomes and better management of public assets as the digital infrastructure increases.

The City is developing a digital infrastructure plan (DIP) and so it's D.I.P, you will hear us refer to this quite a bit or DIP if we're feeling extra speedy.

and it's intended to help us, you know, guide us to make day to day decisions as well as long term, strategic planning for the city. We recognize that there are a lot of unknowns in this area when it comes to this round.

So, the D.I.P or DIP is intended to help, bring clear.

To help bring clarity and some certainty to our residents and stakeholders.

So, you know, what is the digital infrastructure plan? So, as I mentioned

It's very important to note that, we have a shared understanding of what we're talking about as, as we begin the consultation. As you can see from the definition, we've taken a very broad approach to defining digital infrastructure and so

Would residents interact or benefit from the city's digital infrastructure?

There can be a variety of ways of the benefit being increased, for example,

accessing information from the City's website, accessing more information or using,

you know, a chatbot feature for the COVID-19 related information. Or just paying for fees and services online.

Using an automated meter, for example, for water usage, we've included a picture here and, of course, using sensors to improve road safety. So these are some ways that we see digital infrastructure affect our day to day.

What's brought us here is a number of council directives over the last few years.

So we want to bring your attention to February 2019 directive for city staff to develop a city wide digital infrastructure, policy framework and governance model. That turn out to be pretty long name so we've named it digital infrastructure plan as well. Again, DIP, you'll hear us say that a lot and so really the DIP took shape

more in 2020, so in January 2020 we brought a report to City Council where they approved of 5 working principles and vision statements. At the same time they actually approved 2 further directives.

One of them is for us to, of course, work on development of the DIP

And the other one is to make sure that any digital initiatives, are in compliance with the 5 working principles as well as work already done before the DIP is completed.

And in addition to those directives, council has also approved directives related to digital autonomy, so, for example, in January 2020, the directive was for staff to consult stakeholders on the control and autonomy of its core digital infrastructure and more recently in March of this year, City Council also directed staff to consult on the building and procuring of digital infrastructure, and to report back to a committee by the end of the 2nd quarter 2021.

So, you know, these are just some of the directives from City Council that brought us here today.

And so, with that said, I wanted to get to know you a little bit better and so I'd like to start our first poll through Slido.

So here is the, the QR code is here on the screen as well as the the note. So, please make sure.

You can scan that, or you can enter hashtag discotech

And so, you can see, of course, on my screen live that there's lots of people participating and we're getting a better understanding of who is in the room. So to speak.

And while we're doing that, I'll give people a, this is our 1st, um.

1st question, so I'll just give everyone a little more time to get their Slido working and so one of the questions in the chats is asking whether the slides will be shared and definitely they will be shared. In fact

we will, you know, make sure that this slide as well as the presentation, as Hamish mentioned earlier will be available for everyone. So, it looks like the answers are in.

Not a lot of students in the room, Over 50% of you have said that you work in the technology industry. Nice to see you.

and 32% of you said you are working in an industry other than technology and some of you are stating that you are none of the above and so I'd be happy to move on to our next poll.

So the next poll is, how did you hear about us?

And the, and the choices are on the screen as well as, um, should be showing up on your on your device.

I'm just going to scroll down a little so we can see everyone's answers.

And if you're having trouble using the tool, please, you know,

Let us know in the chat,

I always like to see a colleague, friend and family member show up because I,

it feels very organic, a great way for us to connect with others.

So I definitely I want to plug. Now, if you have other friends and colleagues and family members, who might be interested in this, please let them know and we hope to see them at the future discotechs.

Great. So I think we're getting pretty close to the final answer here on this particular question. Many of you have heard from our website or mailing list.

Nice to see you here. Thank you for coming.

Some of you were directed here from a local organization and about 30% of you were directed here by a colleague, friend or family member. So that's wonderful.

Great. So I'm just going to go back to our presentation.

And I'm going to continue the presentation and now that we know each other a little bit better, who is in the room, to really

talk a little bit more about, you know, go back to my favorite topic, the digital infrastructure plan.

So, again, just to give you an overview of what it is, it's, you know, it's what you're seeing on the screen and really it's being developed as a tool to enhance transparency, accountability and consistency of City decision making, around digital infrastructure.

You know, in a tangible sense outside of these 5 principles that City Council adopted, we're working on a plan, right? So we're bringing you here together today so we can work on the plan so that it's a product that we can all stand behind, that includes the public voice. So part of the process is to develop the plan in a way that ensures that, you know, the content is valid and current. Part of that is asking you these questions so that you can make us aware of different issues as well as making them accessible.

And as we encounter policy gaps, that they're addressed and integrated into the plan as soon as possible, and finally a key component of developing any plan is to establish that governing, and governance model.

So that we can be responsive to the complexities of decision making in the digital realm. So it's not a one and done for this plan.

We want to make sure that it continues to work in a resilient way.

So, we've talked a lot about the 5 principles and so here they are.

These principles were approved by city council again in 2020 in January, where we, you know, they are working principles, which means that we are still in the process of studying them and socializing them. Like, we are today examining them.

So with that, in mind, the principles themselves, become part of the scope and content that we want to discuss with you today and give you feedback on today.

So, if you want to know about the principles, about some of the use cases, etc, you can always visit our web page. I know that, over half of you already directed through the web page. So, it gives me a pretty good idea that you're familiar with the topic already.

So, that's wonderful to see. And so the plan is taking shape now. So, this page is just to give you a visualization of how conceptually the plan is organized.

So, as you can see, we have each principle as the main organization element of the document. So that each principle will have its own chapter.

And then we'll be drawing on the themes embedded within each principal with a vision statement, as, you know, and then to extend that content through.

Through themes and descriptive text as well as policy statements and so these policy statements will provide more specific guidance on how the vision, and the principle will be achieved. And so you can see that these policy statements carry a lot of importance and that they will form, sort of the bulk of our concentration of these discotechs and public consultation as well as specific stakeholder consultation, and I'll get into that a little bit in more detail shortly.

So one thing I want to just point out is, you know, we're talking about a plan, the digital infrastructure plan, and sometimes people think about other plans, like the Official Plan, we've used that analogy a lot. The Official Plan is how the city is building its physical city and this DIP is how we're building our digital city, but if you look at, if you follow along with us on this journey, so far you can see that, you know, this is not a plan that is sort of, doesn't have that geospatial layer.

So for example, you're not going to see a map from this plan that says, here's where certain technologies will be concentrated or here's where the broadband conduit will be placed, necessarily from this work.

So, I just want to give that context that difference between the plan that we're building through the principle vision statement, themes and descriptive texts as well as policy statements versus other plans, which have more of a tangible geographical layer on them.

So, how will this plan be used so that we already have a number of existing regulations and policies says you can imagine, and on the topics that we are already familiar with and are topics of the digital infrastructure plan, like personal information, like privacy like security, so we're building on existing regulations to ensure that it's a consistent approach.

And so our experience to date in doing this has been somewhat challenging because it's a complex topic and there hasn't always been measurable criteria in place for that objective evaluation.

For each working principal, so we've actually developed an interim solution for internal guidelines for staff to do that work. So that's been a great learning experience for us as well.

So we are starting to do that on the inside of the city. And so I'd like to give you a little bit of a quick case study.

To give you an idea how the

The various principles actually work in a specific project, and the one that we want to talk to you about is Wi-Fi enabled connected lighting. Now many cities around the world have this.



And so, when we look at this, you know, we have lots of different staff at the city. Wonderful staff who have different parts of interest. So, our park staff want to make sure that the lights are efficient and they work well

and that they're sustainable, etc, but from the digital infrastructure plan principle perspective, my team is reviewing this type of project through the lens of each of the principles.

So from an equity inclusion perspective, does it make public spaces safer? Has a human centric approach been used to develop the interface and is it inclusive?

Can it be used in a way that is as inclusive as possible? So that everyone can use the devices?

and the lighting? So another example would be from a social, environmental and economic benefits perspective:

Are we selecting technology on criteria like, lowest energy use and we're using vendors from a diverse supplier list. So this is to just give you an example of how we apply this particular,

to specific projects, the principles of the digital infrastructure plan.

And so, I like to just hand it over now to, my colleague Waheeda in our purchasing materials, division and she can talk a little bit about procurement process overview. Over to you.

Thank you Alice. So good afternoon everyone. The City's purchasing and materials management division, known as PMMD is happy to be here today and engage with you all on the city's digital infrastructure plan as we understand the key way in which the city can drive the DIP is through procurement. So just to provide an overview and some context, the city's purchasing division is one of the largest purchasers in the public sector. In 2020 alone, we awarded contracts worth 2.2Billion dollars across key divisions, such as construction facilities management and IT.

And so overall, the city's procurement processes are fair, open and transparent and we continue to look for opportunities to improve. Some of the examples of how our current processes are fair, open and transparent are any suppliers wishing to market their product or service outside an active procurement process must do so by registering with the city's Lobbyist Registrar's office to ensure there's no preferential treatment.

To avoid an unfair advantage, suppliers who are involved in developing the solicitation such as technical specifications or evaluation criteria cannot bid on a solicitation.

Further, all interested suppliers have equal access and opportunity to submit bids to the city's online procurement system, which is SAP Ariba and this is free to register for. Evaluations are conducted in a structured manner based on clear criteria outlined in the solicitation.

And after a contract has been awarded, unsuccessful suppliers have the opportunity to request a debrief to receive feedback on why they were not selected.

Next slide. Thank you. So the purpose of this slide is to briefly describe the key solicitation method, the city uses to go out to market.

The first one being a request for proposal or RFP which is used when the city has identified a procurement need but how it will be achieved is unknown.

therefore, allowing suppliers to propose solutions to us.

The city also issues a request for quotation, we call it a RFQ for goods and services, which is when the city knows about the quantity and quality of the product or service and is looking to procure it.

We also issue a request for tender also known as a RFT, which is very similar to a RFQ, but it is specifically issued for construction projects.

The city also issues request for supplier qualification to gather supplier information with the intention of creating a prequalified list of suppliers for future procurements.

Lastly, the city issues a negotiated RFP, which is very similar to a RFP, but it allows for negotiations between the city and the supplier.

And these are frequently used to conduct procurements for technology and therefore, in the interest of time and relevance for this consultation, I will hand it over to my colleague Michelle to walk us through the high level process of how the city conducts a nRFP. Thanks Michelle, over to you.

Thanks Waheeda. Good afternoon everyone. I'll just take a few minutes quickly to walk you through the high level nRFP life cycle process flow. So this is one of the strategic sourcing vehicles

we typically use for larger procurements and we have used these across the categories that Waheeda alluded to earlier, such as construction technology facilities management. So, at a very high level, we kick off by developing the actual nRFP document.

So, that process involves PMMD working with the client as well as other cross functional groups, such as legal services to draft and finalize what that package will look like before it goes out to the market.

There are times where the city may make a decision to actually onboard a 3rd party fairness monitor and we'll actually use that particular external resource to really oversee the process as we move through, to make sure that everything, from a fairness standpoint is ticked and tied and fairness is not being compromised.

Once the actual nRFP has been drafted and finalized.

We'll then post it in Ariba and in the context of technology, any vendor that is registered and setup in Ariba under the information and technology commodity type will receive notification that a

procurement is available for them to take a look at and determine if they'd like to participate. At a minimum, procurements are posted for 4 weeks. So that's that's the absolute minimum that we will keep something out on the market.

But it is important to note that depending on the scope complexity as well as the number of requirements that are within a solicitation, it could be posted for a longer period of time.

So, it could be anywhere between 4 maybe perhaps even up to 8 weeks. Once the solicitation has been posted, there is a solicitation deadline, a submission deadline, sorry,

That is indicated in that document and suppliers who are interested in participating, need to respond in Ariba by that deadline if they'd like to be considered. The evaluation process is outlined in the document and

PMMD begins that process for each submission that is received. So the first stage is always a review and a validation of a stage that we call mandatory submission and technical requirements.

So these are the must haves that the city is looking for from any potential supplier that we're looking to see what they can and can't provide.

So, if any suppliers are deemed noncompliant for a mandatory submission or technical requirement, the city will allow a rectification period. And we'll send out a rectification notice so that they can address those deficiencies.

If the supplier fails to satisfy any the mandatory submission or technical requirements within the rectification period, that period is typically 5 business days, then they would be excluded from any further consideration and moving forward in the process.

For each proposal that passes that mandatory submission and technical requirement stage,

we will review and we will evaluate and score all of the requirements that have been outlined against evaluation criteria and weightings that have been identified in the nRFP. Once that process concludes the evaluation stage is concluded a top ranked

supplier is identified,

and we will then enter and notify that supplier that we'll be entering into negotiations.

If it is determined that, while we are going through the negotiation process with the top ranked vendor.

It is determined that we cannot conclude negotiation successfully, we can choose to terminate negotiations with the top ranked supplier and moved to the 2nd ranked vendor or alternatively,

depending on the scenario the city may choose to just abort the nRFP process.

But that's the last resort. Once we've concluded negotiations, hopefully successfully concluded negotiations we will then report and we will draft a report in order to obtain approval. And that approval may be required from committee...

... it could be from City Council. What really drives where we need the approval from is the contract value and the term of the contract. So, depending on those two things, it will determine who we go to for approval. Once we receive approval to successfully award

the contract, the city will notify the vendor, and then we will move forward with actually executing the agreement in docusign. As the last point here it's important to note that within the nRFP process

There's no legally binding relationship created with the supplier and the city, until we have executed a written agreement.

So I hope that this gives a little bit of flavor and context for the negotiated request for proposal process and I'll hand it back over to you, Alice.

Great Thank you so much. That's great information to have and thank you very much to Waheeda as well.

I will be handing it over to my colleague Hamish in a moment, but not before we do one more poll together. A bit of a moment of truth for us. We'd like to know

If you have, you know, understanding of why we're developing

the DIP, I'm feeling speedy

So far, wow, this is good.

I hope its not just one person answering so far. Oh, well, okay. That's okay.

Great.

I know there's lots of you in the, I think there's about 56 attendees about 15 minutes ago. So,

Hopefully, we're getting more attendees now as well, so it's wonderful to see all of you participating. This is great.

So, around, you know, 85% of you are saying that you do understand why we're developing the DIP and some of you are waiting to see and you're not sure and you're undecided.

And so, hopefully the upcoming information will help you clarify that, and you can always reach out to us and we're always happy to speak with you as well. Excellent.

So, with that, I'm going to hand it over to my colleague Hamish, and he will walk you through some of the consultation process and approaches.

Thanks, Alice and just for everyone's information, we're about halfway through the presentation. We're aiming to have it wrapped up by 3:05.

So, about 25 minutes to go, and then there'll be 50 minutes of Q & A

as Alice mentioned at the start of the meeting. Okay. So just a couple of slides to let you know about the consultation approach and process.

So we're here today to address directors from City Council related to digital autonomy and the remainder of the presentation we're going to provide you with more information about the consultation process itself,

our understanding of what we think digital autonomy is from a local government perspective.

I'm also presenting you with our approach in terms of the relationship of digital autonomy to the DIP

and how it should be implemented going forward. And so, in talking about these things we want to know what you think about everything: what you like, what you don't like or is there anything we've missed.

Next slide please.

So, that process is shown on this slide essentially. The meeting being today at the top on June 21st. In the morning,

or sometime,

shortly after today,

we will have an online feedback form posted to the project web page where people can provide written comments

for 2 weeks afterwards and that web page is [Toronto.ca/connectedcommunity](http://Toronto.ca/connectedcommunity).

Just look for the digital infrastructure plan tab.

In addition to the public meeting today, we're also undertaking stakeholder consultations in the next 4 to 6 weeks.

And then after the summer, sometime in September, we don't have a specific date yet, we'll be doing more extensive consultations related to the DIP.

And at that time, you'll have an opportunity to review the draft document in more detail, including policy statements that are under development.

And in that sort of framework that that Alice was mentioning in previous slide. In addition to that consultation process, you can always email us at any time at

[digitalfeedback@toronto.ca](mailto:digitalfeedback@toronto.ca)

Next slide please, Alice. So this is a little roadmap to show you where we are in the process to build out the DIP, you can see the gold star shows where we are right now. All the work

that has taken place prior to the gold star, lead up to obviously to this point. And but also to

the formation and adoption of those 5 working principles.

And you can also see that there's more work to come, including additional consultations.

And feedback from these consultations is really critical to ensure that we end up with a plan that reflects the City's - and your - vision and aspirations as it relates to digital infrastructure. Thank you again for attending today.

Um,

in addition to what's shown on the slide,

there's other processes going on,

which,

obviously aren't there but for example,

we're meeting with staff from several other cities to learn about their experiences with these issues for example,

Barcelona,

and we're also working with an advisor from Open North,

through his expertise in this field.

from having worked at the city of Montreal for many years.

All right next slide please, Alice. Okay.

So the remainder of the presentation is largely about digital autonomy and just before I get further into it, as a reminder of the reason for this focus is in response to specific directions, provided by City Council

that Alice mentioned earlier in the presentation. Okay, next slide. Thank you.

Okay, so firstly, what is digital autonomy?

It's a great question, and we will do our best to explain it in a series of slides but firstly, we thought we'd start off with a definition.

So, autonomy itself refers to the quality or state of being self governing and this implies..

This itself implies a level of control and independence. Thinking about this in the context of local government and technology, the draft definition that we have crafted is that digital autonomy

refers to the ability to control the selection, use,

and design of its digital infrastructure to deliver public services,

and to advance the public interest. So with that, I'll just go to the next slide. We do have a Slido question about this, just to sort of

Test the room to see if that definition that draft definition resonates with whatever thoughts you may have on the topic. So just a slight difference of format

because I think in answering this question, it's important to sort of see the definition in front of you.

If you're able to refer to Slido,

now, that way, I'll leave this screen up so that you can see the draft definition while you're thinking about it.

and I'll read it out again. The draft definition is:

digital autonomy refers to the city's ability to develop,

maintain and control the selection use and design of it's digital infrastructure

to deliver public services and advance the public interest

as informed by legislation and community consultation.

So, we're just looking to get a sense of how closely the draft definition aligns with what digital autonomy means to you.

Interesting, great. Thanks for that.

So, obviously, the dominant response there is that it has some similarities and some differences.

The next one is that it's very similar.

And so those are the interesting responses, itself.

So thank you for that. I'd like to take this opportunity again, at this point to remind you all about the online feedback form, because we definitely want to hear more about what those similarities and differences are.

Okay, thank you for that. So we'll move on to the slide. So why does it matter and why did the city council direct us to look into this issue?

And that's obviously a question we're asking ourselves in addition to that definition that we just walked through.

So,  
we're seeing aspects of digital autonomy,

play out in the international arena with conversations about control, security and privacy related to companies and products,

such as Tik Tok and Facebook. In the local government contexts,

the issues,

are not necessarily related to territorial boundaries

but more directly related to ensuring

the city has greater control and independence of its digital infrastructure.

And typical or existing processes to build out that digital infrastructure often, bring with them type restrictions and limitations around product options,

repairs and maintenance and data ownership and so on. So

the term digital autonomy is a signal from City Council that they're interested in a new approach

that is centered on the idea of having greater control

and coordination around decision making combined with a focus on the public interest. This means that we want to ensure the city has full control, or public control,

around the process to build out the infrastructure.



And so how we are approaching it, next slide, please.

Mostly we could have examined it independently, but we see it as being directly related to the digital infrastructure plan. There's a lot of intersection between digital autonomy and the other 5 existing working principles,

such as equity, democracy, transparency and privacy.

So this is the main reason why we provided you so much context with the DIP, at the start of this presentation. And with that in mind, as we move forward in examining this issue, our approach is to think about

digital autonomy as an additional, or is a new principal, a new 6th principle for the DIP and we'll give you some more information about that as we go along today.

So, using the existing structure of the DIP that Alice walked through earlier, this would mean that digital autonomy would have its own chapter

in the DIP with its own vision statement and policy statements, etc. So we're presenting all this approach to you today for your feedback and .. Content is based on research from other jurisdictions and advice from subject matter experts.

So, we do acknowledge that further research, analysis and consultation is needed to understand the implications and the implementation approaches.

Next slide please. So the scope of issues or themes that we've identified as being related to digital autonomy are summarized on this slide.

The following series of slides expands on these things

and includes a case study page.

So, just to give you a sense of what's coming on the future slides. As already mentioned, we've identified these themes through research and what the other cities are doing and our membership in the City's Coalition for Digital Rights has been instrumental in this regard.

We've also learned from lessons that have happened locally, for example, through the Waterfront Toronto and the Sidewalk Labs proposal.

So, the next series of slides expands on these points, but I did want to note up front that while we see indigenous data governance is a key component of this topic of digital autonomy, we're not exploring it in depth at this time.

We do recognize that there are unique characteristics and considerations related to the collection, curation and ownership of the data belonging to Toronto's indigenous communities.

For this reason, we will undertake to consult with indigenous community stakeholders in health care housing,

education, technology, and so on in defining indigenous data governance.

And that will be done as a parallel governance strategy for this project.

Next slide please. The first theme we've identified to explore as part of digital autonomy is open source.

The approach we've taken, just to kind of orient yourselves to these slides, is to convey what we're thinking about at the top of the table and the "what's under consideration?" box

And then we explain what this means, and then ensure how this is related to digital autonomy at the bottom of this slide.

So, for open source, software licenses can generally be separated into 2 categories.

Close source licenses and open source licenses.

Traditionally, the city works with closed source or proprietary software. This type of software uses copyright law to keep source codes in the hands of the rights holder.

And exerts control over the end users, such as the city, as to how the software can be used.

Conversely, an open source license uses copyright law makes source codes public and provides everyone the right to use, modify and share it.

So, we see great value and opportunity in this approach, but we also recognize that there's likely to be occasions where close source will continue to be the most balanced option. So, as a case study, just to quickly walk you through.

An example of where opensource has been used, and we thought this was a good example from

the City of Montreal and

where a free app was developed under their open source procurement strategy.

The app targets the problem of snow removal operations being impeded by parked vehicles on city streets.

So that residents who had the app could see where the

clearances were taking place ahead of time and the benefits of that, obviously for the city, it makes their their operations more efficient and for the resident, it's significantly more convenient to to remove your car rather than have it towed.

And the app uses open city data to notify residents of plowing operations in the areas that the user would select.

That's that's the case study for for open source. The next theme we're looking at is open standards.

So open standards are common rules that allow any user to create compatible and consistent products, processes and services.

Using open standards increases interoperability and could help the city to save time and money by using things that are already available.

It could increase interoperability as already mentioned and it could help avoid vendor lock-in and monopoly situations.

Open standards are important for interoperability and compatibility between the city's digital infrastructure, including data sets both in the city

and between the city and external systems.

So, just to give you a quick example of a case study, where open standards have been used. Next slide please.

So this case study is from Portugal

where they developed a national digital identity ecosystem

and authentication platform provided by the

Portuguese government. Their efforts to digitize identity and

authentication services for citizens began a long time ago, with chip enabled card technology. So this was in approximately 2007.

And then subsequent migration to secure remote digital authentication keys more recently by, around 2014.

And so use of open source APIs was a key component of this undertaking as it allowed any interested governmental or private service provider

the means to provision services, requiring authentication through secure, centralized and trusted public data interface.

It was available as a browser plug in and on mobile devices.

So the platform facilitates access to national tax, health, social security and elections services and it's a repository for personal information, including drivers license

and banking information. The next theme we've identified as part of digital autonomy is open contracting and to walk you through this, I'll hand it back over to my colleagues from the Purchasing and Materials Management division.

Thanks Hamish, so hi everyone, so,

as mentioned earlier in this presentation, one of the key components in digital autonomy is open

contracting.

Open Contracting is about publishing and using open accessible and timely information on public contracting to engage citizens and businesses to fix problems and deliver results at best value to ensure the city's existing public

procurement processes are following best practices.

We continue to look for process improvement,

therefore,

with respect to what's under consideration for us,

the city will review with existing purchasing policies and procedures to determine if they are in alignment with best practices for open contracting.

So,

part of this work will also include exploring the use of the open contracting data

standard, also known as OCDS for procurements,

including digital infrastructure

procurement.

The OCDS is the only international open standard,

which describes how to publish data and documents at all stages of the contracting process

and it was created to support organizations to increase contracting transparency.

So the city will compare the standard against our existing purchasing policies and procedures to determine if they are in alignment with the OCDS and determine what areas of improvement can be made.

What this means for us is that, while the city's existing procurement process follows leading procurement practices that are fair open and transparent, this review will allow us to identify opportunities for improvement.

So how does this relate to digital autonomy? Or how is it related to autonomy?

Well,

conducting the open contracting review will allow for continued autonomy by ensuring the public is provided with transparency for city technology,

contracting with other jurisdictions that can assist in lowering barriers to entry.

And the city government continues to provide fair competition and a level playing field for smaller firms, resulting in more bids and more choices for the government.

Next slide please.

So,

for the open contracting case

study,

the city will compare existing purchasing policies and procedures with guidelines from the Open North and best practices with other relevant research organizations as may be relevant.

Preliminary review of the city's

procurement processes has shown that our policies and procedures are in alignment with Open North guidelines.

So,

for example,

the Open North guide,

the first

Open North guideline requires fairness for all suppliers to submit bids. The city reached this by ensuring its procurement processes policy has a non-discrimination section to ensure no supplier receives preferential treatment.

Another one is the Open North guideline also requires that suppliers have no contribution to drafting solicitations.

The city meets this through the Purchasing By-Law which has a conflict of interest or unfair advantage section that aligns with this requirement and showing this is prohibited.

Open North also requires costs to be published for free. The city

meets this by ensuring the

procurement processes policy

aligns with this requirement by ensuring that competitive procurements are available to suppliers through SAP Ariba

which is free to sign up for.

Another key Open North guideline is to ensure all awarded contracts are published. The city's

contract processes policy

aligns with this requirement by publicly posting all awarded contracts online and last,

but not least Open North recommendations

also suggest having a dispute resolution process.

The procurement process meets this by ensuring that we align with this by including a Pre and post bid award dispute process that is available to all suppliers.

So, I will end by saying that, as we continue to conduct a more comprehensive review, we will consider opportunities for process improvements. Thank you and we look forward to further engaging with you all on this.

Back to Hamish.

Thanks Waheeda. So just a couple more slides to wrap up before we move into the Q & A session. So, two last themes to walk through, the 2nd to last being data residency in Canada.

So, data residency refers to the physical or geographical location of an organization's digital information while at rest and while it's in transit.

The basic concept of this theme is that digital information collected as part of a digital infrastructure solution is the intellectual property of the city and it's residents and should be secured in Canada by default, unless suitable provisions for its transfer have been met.

While it's not possible to entirely secure the transmission of data, a combination of Canada only cloud solutions, robust data encryption and strict provisions for secure access will set the city on the solid footing to determine what types of data may be transferred and stored outside of Canada.

Some Canadian provinces already have a requirement for data residency by public institutions, so British Columbia and Nova Scotia, for example. So there's already some precedent for this approach.

And so we're, just actually in the next slide, walking through one of those examples with British Columbia.

Next slide please.

So this is a case study of data residency in British Columbia.

So the regulations in British Columbia require all cities and public bodies to ensure personal information is stored and accessible in Canada.

Between 2012 and 2019, the province monitored and advised on the adoption of cloud computing in the public sector specifically in education, and issued a number of bulletins cautioning any procurement

and use of cloud platforms, must adhere to the data residency provisions of the freedom of information and protection of privacy act,

FIPPA.

And in 2020, the province relaxed out of residency restrictions in response to COVID-19 and to facilitate international health information sharing. So that's just one precedent we're looking at.

And as mentioned previously, Nova Scotia is another case study that we are also

looking into in further detail. I'd like to move on to the next slide please Alice.

This is the last theme to explore today.

So, there's a growing issue with digital infrastructure being the prohibition by manufacturers and vendors of the repair or modification of that infrastructure, except by service providers authorized by the manufacturer.

And sometimes there's a requirement that this has to be done by the manufacturer itself.

This is typically implemented by technical or contractual meetings.

This therefore has a direct impact over the city's ability to have control over approaches product. And so we see the right to repair as also being foundational to having digital autonomy.

There's also potential relationships to other DIP themes that we want to explore further, such as environmental benefits and linkages to the circular economy.

A final note importantly is that we want to explore the right to repair in both the hardware space. So that would be devices, for example, and sensors, but also the software space, and the software as a service platform, for example.

And just a quick case study with right to repair. The European Union is in the process of implementing requirements to improve product reparability or durability.

Through our membership in coalition cities for digital rights,

we're making connections with policy folks there to learn more about their experience with this process. As mentioned just before I think this is an interesting case study because it helps demonstrate the the intersection between right to repair and digital autonomy

and the other principles that are already embedded

in the digital infrastructure plan so environmental benefits,

for example.

So, I'm going to pause there and let's open it up Alice. If you can go to the next slide please.

For the next slider question.

So, at this point, we'd just like to get a sense of whether or not, you think the themes identified will achieve the city's draft definition of digital autonomy. And so the draft definition is up on the slide again. It says.

Digital autonomy refers to the city's ability to develop,

maintain and control the selection, use and design of a digital infrastructure to deliver public services and advance the public interest as informed by legislation and by community consultation.

And so the themes that we identify, just typically go through those again, our open source.

Open standards, open, contracting, data residency in Canada

and the final one was right to repair. We're looking to get a sense from you if you think those themes will help us achieve or help the city achieve

the draft definition of digital autonomy.

Okay, those are fair responses. So.

Most of you agree with that and

I think there's a fair amount, more than a third, that neither agree or disagree.



Some strongly agreed. No disagreeing or no strongly disagreeing.

So that's great. And again, at this point, just a reminder about the online feedback form, to go ahead and fill that out, provide us more context around your comments. Okay, last couple of slides. So just a little bit of information about how we're thinking digital autonomy would be integrated into the DIP. I've touched on some of this already.

So, we see it as a potential 6th principle for the DIP, its just shown in the hash bubble there, and that approach acknowledges the relationship between digital autonomy and the existing working principles

and so through this consultation,

we're also looking to get a sense from you as to whether or not this makes sense to you or if you have any other ideas,

as to how we could approach it, but next slide please, Alice. If we do go along the lines of thinking about it as a 6th principle following the current format, and lay out of the plan, it would require its own vision statement

for that principle, and so we've developed a draft vision statement, which is shown on this slide.

And this is also something we're interested in getting your feedback on. So it says: "the City will maintain control in the selection, use and design of its core digital infrastructure,

so that it can act with autonomy and in a self determined manner within the digital realm". And I just want to note I misspoke there and said core digital infrastructure.

We're just talking about all digital infrastructure, I mean, that was just misspoken.

So on the next slide, we're going to pop back over to Slido to get your sense about that specifically asking about the draft vision statement. Does it accurately reflect a direction that you think

the city should be heading? So on this slide is the draft vision statement.

And again, we're looking to get a sense from you if you think it

reflects the direction that you want to see

Toronto heading in with respect to digital autonomy.

Okay, pretty balanced results there.

Some strongly agree, some agree.

About a third are undecided and about a third disagree.

Again, we really want to find out more about your thoughts on this. So, particularly those that are in disagreement, and perhaps it will come out through the Q&A. But if it doesn't, I will direct you again to the online feedback form.

I'm just going to wrap up the last couple of slides next slide please, Alice.

In terms of how we're thinking about implementing

Digital autonomy, we recognize that most of the issues we just described represent a significant divergence from the traditional approach to building out digital infrastructure.

And it also represents significant changes to the way in which industry is used to developing and supplying technology.

So while we recognize that there's clear advantages to pursuing this approach, we also recognize that achieving autonomy is not something that can be done at the flip of a switch, that it will be disruptive and that it will therefore, take time.

And so with this in mind, we're recommending that the digital autonomy principle to be applied gradually over time

to new digital infrastructure initiatives. And so this approach would minimize disruption, for example, to service delivery and allow the city and its partners to learn and adapt over time.

Importantly, we do see that there is a role for the public to play in the decision making process to help identify and prioritize

suitable initiatives. Okay. So just before I wrap up just, next slide please, Alice.

And just a quick reminder before we go into the Q & A, in terms of where we're at, with next steps.

You've already seen this slide... it's the timeline...

We're at the gold star right now. There's a staff report

going to the general government and licensing committee

in about a week's time.

and if you're interested in that, you can make deputations and submit written comments

and talk to the committee further about those interests and concerns, if you have them, and then obviously more consultation to come,

In the fall.

Next slide please and again, just a reminder about the purpose of this consultation, which is responding to directors from city council related to digital autonomy.

Talking about these things we're wanting to know what you think, what you like, what you don't like, and so on. And so just one final note before we go into Q & A. Next slide please Alice.

A reminder for how to participate in case people join late and didn't see this slide at the start.

There's a hand icon if you'd like to, that's the hand icon to help us get a sense of who would like to to speak or ask a question.

And if you're doing that, don't forget to mute yourself or unmute yourself as the case may be and also an important reminder again, just to be conscious of the comments you make,

and to not post or speak out any personal confidential information, because this presentation, or this meeting is being recorded and will be posted to the project web page in the coming days.

We will do our best to answer as many questions as possible, but if we don't get time, there are other ways you can contact us, our email addresses on this slide. It's [digitalfeedback@toronto.ca](mailto:digitalfeedback@toronto.ca) and mentioned many times, the online feedback form

will be available from the web page that's on this slide,

shortly and we mentioned the June 29th committee meeting.

And Lawrence mentioned that there's more discotechs to come, those public meetings in the fall. So.

I look forward to more conversations with you and with that, I'll hand it back to Alice.

Thank you. Thanks Hamish. I'm going to just stop sharing the document.

So that you can have a little bit of a different view and we can start our Q & A section. I'm very, very much looking forward to this and hearing what you have in mind.

One thing I want to just mentioned is, I don't know if there's a way to make the comments public to everyone. So, maybe we can think about doing that now as we,

I'm going to go through the - and thank you Rhonda for letting us know that the participants can't see the chat comments. So there have been questions coming through that are not in the Q & As.

And I think if you put the questions in the Q & As, it will show up for everyone. I think that maybe the trick. I'm going to,

look to see if that's what everyone's thinking.

So, there's two different areas. So, one is Q&A and one is chat.

My understanding is, if you post your question in Q & A, it could be promoted so that everyone can see it.

So I'll give you a moment to find those buttons as well and maybe try one.

Great the team has jumped in to do some testing. This is great. And just while you're doing that Alice, there is one person with their hand raised if they want to go ahead and ask a question, Ushnish?

You can go ahead and ask your question. Can you hear me? Yes, we can.

So, I appreciate all the work that has gone on to developing the plan and the principles. There's some

a bunch of good principles in there. So, my problem is the implementation part. Some of those principles are really hard to implement. So I'll pick on the open source

part. Unless you have that relationship with the open source community and you just kind of put out a RFP, you're not gonna get a response from that community right? Because they tend to be small, sometimes individual,

Um, sort of individuals working on open source projects so I'm wondering what the plans are to

work with those communities,

like the open source communities that already exist in Toronto to,

you know, before the RFPs go out so that they are actually bidding on the,

the contracts and so on and not scrambling kind of after the RFP goes out.

I will start just by saying that's a great comment and one that we've definitely thought a lot about and how to how to make work. And so, I just want to say, thank you so much for asking a question in the straightforward way.

And we hope to hear more of that and then I'd like to maybe pass the virtual mic. Imagine we're doing this in a real room and I have to walk over with the mic and we used to share mics,

This is wild, but I tend to pass the virtual mic over to either Michelle or Waheeda. I don't know if you have any thoughts on that.

On that yeah, it's a very valid question.

I think it's definitely something, there's several things related to the DIP implementation that we've talked about internally and this is one of them. So it's something that we'll have to take away for sure. As we move forward.

I mean Hamish said this, it's going to definitely be a gradual transition right. To what we're discussing today and how these these principles will be embedded essentially into procurements as we move forward.

So, it's definitely a takeaway something we have to think about because

you know, it's like you said, it's not every vendor that's going to be able to participate in some of those cases.

So the city will, I think the short answer will be will have to do it on a procurement by procurement basis to see where things make the most sense. But it is something we're contemplating. And I guess we also look forward to any suggestions

you may have for us in terms of things we may need to consider, with that particular principle, as we move forward.

Right, I think we're just testing out

the Q & As and please go ahead and put some questions in the Q & As if they come up. I did want to go through some of the questions that have come up in the, in the chat.

Um.

If that makes sense, now, maybe some of the ones that we have answered and didn't know that not everyone can see them all at the same time.

So some of the questions that we've answered is, Lisa had asked about, are the, uh, is the team connected with the innovate cities, open data project.

We have had the pleasure of meeting with innovate cities in the past and they're,

doing some great work. They've just had their launch as probably many of you recently know in the last month. So we are definitely connected there and look forward to continuing to work together. So we are not

specifically working on their open data, working with them on their open data project,

right now.

another question we have answered is around,

um,

someone asked a question about how will non-citizen residents,

be able to participate,

um,

those who are not known to the government,

or don't have government issued ID.

This is something that we encounter in all policy making here at the city. The City of Toronto is a sanctuary city, which means that we are committed to providing services to everyone, undocumented residents included.

And so we'll be sure to take that inclusive lens as we develop this policy and others as well.

I think another question that was answered in the chat earlier. It was, are there documents from the previous DIP consultations that we conducted in 2019 and 2020?

And the answer is yes, we have a number of documents published, including the exact public consultation playbooks, etc. Those documents are on our website.

Again, you know, please go there and take a look at the documents, bring us your questions, you know, email us, etc, etc.

because I think some of the other questions that will come up in the chat around, are in the other areas, the other 5 principles that are already established.

And so that's another place where, um, you know, as we go out for public consultations again, we'd like to hear from you... would love to hear from you.

Alice, I'm noticing there's a call-in user with their hand raised.

So, and just a reminder for those folks that have raised their hand and had their question answered, if they can remember to lower their hands, that would be helpful.

So, the call-in user, you can go ahead and ask your question please.

Hello.

Hi there. Yes, Hello this is Michael.

I just want to

mention the way some of the wording is represented,

In terms of the definitions and principles,

The overall definition of digital infrastructure,

should have digital automation added to it. Right now it seems to be

sort of concentrating on communication, which is a kind of more passive activity of computers whereas the active activity is automation, which

I think has far greater active implications so,

digital definitely should mention automation and not just be limited to communications

Especially as we go into the future where there is a lot of automation being

considered, and definitely needs to be looked at,

even more so than communication.

So it's the list of types of digital infrastructure mentioned in the definition would include digital automation and in the principals that the main one is the,

the one that refers to benefits should also say,

Social economic and environmental, whatever, those words, our benefits and avoidance of harm.

Because the important thing is that

this should be a real technology impact assessment process.

And, I mean, the minutes from the last CAG, or I think 2 meetings ago did refer to the need to have some sort of process whereby technology can be rejected.

But right now there doesn't seem to be any evaluation of that in the principles.

If we just talked about benefits, it makes it sound like we're just looking for ways to make things look good.

Whereas a real objective technology assessment process would include benefits and harms,

in the assessment, and then that would lead to decisions that could be made,

Um, so.

This is really important because of the

fact that there are sort of a significant number of serious

problems, economic problems, technology

being not so controllable. I mean, we're talking about autonomy here, but.

It's not just autonomy between the cities and the

the companies that make technology, it's also autonomy between people and technology and I think

that we have to worry about the technology being more autonomous, and people not having any control in the future. So these things have to be part of the assessment process. So,

the principle needs to say benefits and avoidance of harm to be actually useful as an assessment process going into the future.

Great thank you for that Michael those are great comments and, we've noted those down.

And just to again, another reminder to the attendees, if you do want to ask questions, feel free to raise your hand. Click on the hand icon and

you can have the opportunity to ask a question.

or make a comment. So I'd like to

go.

Please, let me know if there are any hands up. I can't see all the different buttons at the same time. One of the questions that's come through is

It's, you know,

all technology infrastructure plans require inventory of existing systems or current state. Is there an inventory of software available applications?

Or an algorithm register? If so, can you publish it on the City of Toronto Open Data portal?

So, in our review of some of the other principles again, our conversation today is focused on digital autonomy but absolutely

the reason we included it as a principle, or we want to include as a principle is because it has so many

intersections with the other working principles. So, one of the pieces work that we're looking at doing for the fall is absolutely an

algorithmic registrar, especially from a bias perspective for artificial intelligence and other forms of automation to your point, Michael, on the phone.

So, that work is coming and you will have another opportunity to take a look at that as we come back with more information in the fall for public consultation.



And as we mentioned before, the digital infrastructure plan is a document that will be evolving as things change. So, absolutely. There will be an opportunity for you to continue to give your input on how that is done.

Another question that I'm

seeing in the chat section, not in the Q & As, and I please let me know if I'm missing questions on Q & As,

is that I'm aware of parallel community network initiative in Toronto that addresses

digital access in terms of disadvantages in social policy, but I don't see how those initiatives

fit into this planning and I think you're referring to ConnectTO, another initiative that my team is leading and thanks teammates for juggling multiple, sort of, big profiles the same time.

And so, from a ConnectTO perspective, what's driven us to bring a report to city council around putting connectivity at the center of what we do in February of 2021 is our experience

you know, with regards to digital inequity throughout the pandemic. So, that is something that we believe is very well aligned with the equity inclusion and well run city principles of the digital infrastructure plan.

And so that work is deeply rooted in the other principles as well. So, again, we're seeing the sort of the world's colliding here. We're seeing things come together. The focus of our

conversation today again is digital autonomy, especially as the way that the team has broken out, sort of the themes, but absolutely, we see the ConnectTO program

which aims to leverage public assets for more affordable,

high,  
speed Internet,

for our underserved communities as well,

as embedding,

um,

connectivity as in the center of the work that we do, as we build new parks, as we,

you know,

as we are developing affordable housing as well as the social policies that go around it,

that work is definitely part that's aligned with the,  
in our in our belief with the digital infrastructure plan,  
and very well aligned with other principles.

Um.

Another question here, again in the chat, not in the Q & As, is great session, the principles are extremely admirable. The way that the digital autonomy has been described is likely going to cost the city billions of dollars as paid by tax payers.

What is the city's first step project that will be implemented and what is the projected cost?

I mean,

I think the team can speak to this a bit more,

but as mentioned before we are looking at balancing these principles including well  
run city,

which is a principle that ensures that our technological digital infrastructure development is providing value for our residents and so

I don't have an answer to our first step project.

Um.

And we're definitely looking to balance the different interests and not looking to cost taxpayers billions of dollars in that way.

So, I don't, I think cost the tax payers is a specific way of phrasing that question. So I thank you for those comments.

Just a quick add-on to that Alice we, at this point, we do acknowledge our early stages. We're looking to identify what's in the scope so that we can then kind of dive deeper into looking at implications.

The other work we're doing is meeting with staff from other cities that are more advanced in the timelines than where we are right now. So we have had a couple of conversations with staff from the City of Barcelona, as mentioned as well as Montreal, who are not necessarily

taking a journey down all of these paths but have begun the journey on some of those paths such as open source. And so there's a lot of lessons we can learn from other municipalities.

Okay, I have a question in the Q & A. Go ahead Alex.

Yep, we just have a question in the Q & A.

And the question is, I'll just voice it. Okay let's try it. Let's try a new format.

Do the provisions prevent suppliers contributing to drafting of procurement?

Wait sorry, do the provisions prevent suppliers contributing to drafting of a procurement apply to vendor-initiated deals,

eg. Paylt, Quayside and if not, what steps

as part of this process, will mitigate undue influence on the process in those circumstances?

A bit of a mouthful. Is the question clear to others?

I'm sure we can ask the submitter to clarify that. It could just be me.

We can try to answer it and then if it doesn't answer the question, perhaps we can go to the submitter because it's an important question. I think, to

make clear. I think the question is aimed at proposals that are not put out by the city. I think this is what the question is saying: hey, when their proposals come to you in a different way,

what is your plan to mitigate undue influence? And so perhaps my colleagues, maybe Michelle is in a better position to answer that question, or Waheeda.

Yeah, I'll take a stab at it, so it's Michelle here. So.

There is a, what we covered earlier in the presentation was about that.

No vendor, no supplier is involved in the drafting, or is allowed to be in the drafting of a procurement that we're actively working on or planning to put out to the market. Right?

So that is something that is done internal to the city. As it pertains to, I'll speak to the Swiss challenge, because that's something we've recently done with the Paylt proposal that came in. What I would say there is that

there may be a perception that Paylt somehow assisted with the drafting of that procurement but that is not an actuality what happened. So, there was an unsolicited proposal that was submitted to the Toronto Office of Partnerships and that's the standard process.

And then the team looked at the value, is that something that the city would need to do? Is it something that is aligned with essentially our roadmap and what we're doing with technology. And it was determined that there was value in us pursuing this opportunity.

So, when we embarked on actually drafting the RFP because it was an unsolicited proposal, we had to use that as the genesis and as the basis for what are we looking for, what is the solution that we're trying to implement, etc.

So, that unsolicited proposal was used internally with a core group of people that was defined from the client side from PMMD, from legal, etc. And on that procurement, we actually did have a fairness monitor to draft the actual requirements.

So, the PayIt unsolicited proposal was used as a baseline, but we also enhanced upon that. There were things that that initial unsolicited proposal did not account for that. We talked to technology services. We talked to the CISO office.

We talked to our CIMS group to to figure out what additional things were important to the city as part of the solution and that's how that actual nRFP was drafted before it was put out onto the market.

So I hope that answers your question. So, we always try to ensure as part of fairness for all vendors, that there isn't bias in the actual process when we put out a solicitation. So, everyone gets a full shake.

But in a situation like with the PayIt proposal, it was something that was issued to the city. It wasn't something where the city took the first step in going out. So we did assess it, is what I'm trying to say.

We did assess the proposal, but we also enriched and refined that RFP document to include other things

beyond what the unsolicited proposal contain before it was issued. So we're always looking to ensure that we're not putting someone at a disadvantage when we're putting out a procurement to the market.

Waheeda, I'm not sure if there's anything you wanted to add there. No, that's great. Thank you. Michelle.

I wonder if the question asker can let us know if

we've answered the question or hit the mark.

Maybe the silence means we did an okay job there. Maybe yes and you're always welcome to let us know if, yeah,

in case you're trying to figure out how to use this interface like we sometimes are. Thank you.

There is, um, oh, you can't unmute.

Oh, can we allow the question asker to unmute please.

Yes, um.

And I'm seeing two. Okay. I've got two hands raised. I'll try this person.

Ushnish?

Um.

Does the person have their hand raised? In order for me to know who to unmute can you raise your hand? Because I'm the one that controls the unmuting.

You can't do it yourself so I'm not sure.

Yeah, raise your hand.

Brenda sorry, bear with me.

Sorry people. Brenda,

Go ahead and ask your question, please. Thank you and sorry for all the technological difficulties. So that answers the question with regards to the PayIt program,

but the larger question is, as you acknowledge, there was a perception that,

that unsolicited bid was problematic in a range of ways. We don't need to dive further into that. But, moving forward to avoid that kind of perception

how is this plan for city autonomy going to deal with vendor initiated proposals in particular where, you know, up the,

the core functionality

of the program that's being proposed is not something that the city has said, "hey, we need this right now." It's something that a vendor has said, "hey, wouldn't you like to have this new shiny thing?"

And I understand that, then you had a process of saying, actually, we really need the shiny things.

So what should that thing look like in our context?

But how is that sort of process going to be concretized and published and made accountable and transparent as part of the city's move towards being autonomous and self reliant in terms of their technology choices.

I'll take a crack at this, so I think there are a few things layered in that question. So as far as I'm aware, the only

avenue or means for someone to provide an unsolicited proposal today is

to the Toronto Office of Partnerships like I said earlier, and then we really just take that under advisement. Right? So, we work with the divisions and we also work with a larger group of cross functional divisions to figure out

is this something that we really even want to pursue. And we do not embark on pursuing it without being granted approval by Council. So I think

there were things that definitely came out of the Paylt,

Swiss challenge that we are still working through to see where there are lessons learned and things that we could actually potentially maybe do differently, I think, in terms of how that process was actually run. I think it was run well.

We did onboard a fairness monitor to ensure that we were not cutting corners

so we were not compromising the integrity of that process. Ultimately, what we were going out to market for, was something that the city needed that the residents would actually be able to leverage and use. That there was value in doing it.

And it wasn't just because Paylt wanted to get into the Canadian market. So I think that as it pertains to the unsolicited proposal, we're going to continue to refine and look at, as it pertains to bigger procurements which this Paylt

one was considered a big procurement, to see is that an avenue that we want to continue to use for bigger procurements or does the size of the procurement matter?

So, that's something as a takeaway that we're looking at.

And we'll work with the office,

the Toronto office of the partnership,

but as it pertains to what we're speaking about today for digital autonomy,

I think what we're talking about applies to,

regardless of if it's an unsolicited proposal or,

if it's something that the city is actively choosing to go to market with,

these principles would apply across the board.

So there will be no delineation between is it something that the city initiated versus a vendor initiated whether in terms of applying these actual DIP principles across technology procurements? So, I think that's the best answer

I could give

on to your question and hopefully it answers,

but the only other thing I would add is that as a result of going through the other component that we spoke to today,

the open contracting piece,

we're also examining in terms of our current city practices policies procedures, is there other things we could do?

Right? Or is there ways that we could maybe change or refine our process,

to make sure that things are more open, we believe it's fairly open as it stands, but there may be things that we uncover as we go through the analysis of OCDS, etc. and also the Open North piece that may give us some food for thought.

Right. Some things to take away and consider a bit further. So that would be my answer in response to this question.

Thank you very much Michelle and,

um,

and Brenda,

I take your point and I can give you assurance that we are definitely considering that as we're looking at,

um,

the development of the DIP overall,

and how it's applied more importantly, right.

So, your question is about, you know, you're considering these situations, but what about ones that didn't come up yet in your in presentation.

And definitely, that why, the point of the DIP is that it can be applied to different situations, based on these principles.

So,  
definitely,

we'll be looking at those,

um,

whether it's an adjustment to,

like Michelle said, to the types of,

um,

um,

shiny things as you have put it, that's put before us, that's appropriate for this type of thing or some other idea.

Because, you know, these are just things that we know about. There'll be other things, in my view, that will come up, right.

You know,

for example,

a lot of the things during

the pandemic,

we did not anticipate in this way,

but if we have the principles in place, if we're able to get your voices and please keep the questions coming and we'll do our very best to answer them,

um,

you know,

if we're able to get the public feedback,

we're able to get Council to give their voice to the type of digital world

they want to build here in Toronto. Then we can use those rules, use that thinking and apply it to any situation that comes up to us with your input, right. So, that's what we're here trying to do.

Thank you very much for the question.

Maybe team can you see any other anything else in the chats or in the questions that may have missed?

So, there's no hands raised, but we're here until 4, so you've got you've got us here,

if you want to ask any questions, feel free to raise your hands, or put them in the chat again.

Or the Q & A.

I did,



I did want to give voice to a comment I see here,

that we haven't actually talked about,

which is saying that it is important to fully understand the implications of digital autonomy on those city business divisions that own and operate critical infrastructure assets and so that's a

great point.

We have been thinking about,

you know,  
what does critical infrastructure mean,

in the city context we,

we,  
we know,

we've read the definition from from,

from the federal government perspective,

for example,

but what does that mean for our city business

and what does it mean,

because,

you know, someone else earlier in the chat, I believe, also talked about, sort of the friction between

the different business areas, right, for example. So that's something that we definitely

want to test this principle against, as we develop the policies so that it's not necessarily one size fits all.

That we can use it and adapt it to, perhaps critical infrastructure assets require a different set of rules or, you know, a different evaluation of the same set of rules. That's something we're definitely thinking about as well.

So thank you very much for that question.

We do have a hand raised from Ushnish, so just put your hand down and I'll unmute you.

So go ahead and ask your question.

Hi. So, a lot of the discussion today is on the how and the procurement process, and the principles that are applied. We haven't talked a lot about the what in terms of so, what are the city's needs in terms of digital infrastructure.

And I see

the city doing a lot of public consultation on physical infrastructure projects whether it's the subway or kind of other stuff.

I haven't seen that level of engagement of citizens in determining what the digital infrastructure should be.

And I think the how and the what kind of work together so I'm wondering what the plans are and determining what the needs are,

with citizen consultation. I can start with an answer now. Let's jump in. So, firstly, great question.

And I think,

I think the question really goes to the heart of one or more of the principles in the DIP. One that comes to mind is around transparency and democracy,

which,

which implies that there is a need for the city to include citizens in the decision making process and at the same time there is a need for citizens and residents to understand how decisions are made,

and that includes decisions around digital infrastructure.

So that's definitely,

something we're looking at. I think traditionally some of those thresholds that currently are in place are related to dollar value.

So if there's a dollar value with a certain technology procurement, that triggers a report to a special committee of council. And so there's a kind of public discussion at that time.

It's probably one that can be improved in terms of process making. So those thresholds are certainly part of what we're going to be looking at as we build out the digital infrastructure plan.

We definitely want to get a better understanding of types of projects and digital infrastructure projects that people want to get involved and want to have a say in.

Alice, do you have anything else to add? No, just that it is a great observation and something that, you know, when the more we think about this work, the more layers we see.

And sometimes,

it's easy to separate the layers and make clear how we can translate what we're hearing from you,

what we're discovering through research and policy development, into action and sometimes a little bit harder to be honest with you.

Right. So, we are asking you again to call us out on it, to hold us accountable for this as well. So please let us know how we can do better here as well. Thank you very much.

So, I'm going to read out a question that says: to what degree is digital autonomy an emerging issue in other Toronto municipalities? Sorry in other, sorry about that.

There are other cities in Canada.

I know.

In other Canadian municipalities and does it come into conflict with national policy to view telecommunications and connectivity as market based. As I mentioned before

the ConnectTO file is an

um,

initiative,

that is very close to my team. We're leading that work as well, you know, in partnership with other divisions.

Of course, we do almost all of this work in partnership and, like, the great people you see before you today and we have had a number of conversations at different levels with other Canadian municipalities and regions.

So,

I can tell you that one of the things that we're trying to advocate for is by forming a sort of a coast to coast big cities table under the leadership of

our city manager and deputy manager and we know that table has been in place for about a year now where we're sort of a,

we've been also having great conversations with the,

with the federal government on this as well as our own provincial counterparts.

The point and the purpose of those tables is to come to a common understanding of some of the issues.

We may not address the issues the same way, but we're working on building a common narrative and then to advocate for stronger municipal voice, especially in some of the telecommunications ground, because we're talking about digital infrastructure.

So, you know, the whole facilities based competition conversation comes up often in these tables. And I don't want to take the time talking about that. But the answer is,

yes we're considering how we can best position municipalities to give more voice to

our residents and businesses and definitely from a federal perspective and happy to chat more about that. If you want to email us or fill out a questionnaire, please do so, thank you.

In the Q & As, I see a question saying, I understand the last caller's question. Broadly speaking, what are the kinds of projects we're talking about?

Does anyone want to answer that question? Maybe Hamish?

Sure, I mean, at this point, we haven't turned our minds to towards what projects would be implemented again, our... the first kind of step we're taking on this journey is to identify what's in scope. We have to get those policies pieces

in place before anything would be triggered. But again, I think

part of the conversation and part of the journey is understanding

what you - or what the residents - and what business groups think would be suitable for this. I think the Montreal example that we walked through as the case

study was a really neat one because it demonstrated a great deal of benefits, both to the city and to residents. That was one that wasn't disruptive. So, I think

you know, without any decisions having been made, I think those those types of projects might be one that would be ideal for our initial steps.

Having said that I mean, I'm not speaking for anyone with that answer, it's just that it's just a possible

direction that we could go in. We don't have a decision made just yet.

Okay, yeah, and I wanted to just, in the chat,

I don't know if everyone can see the chat, but in answer to the question around digital autonomy, especially as it comes to a view with conflict of a national policy around telecommunications and connectivity as market based,

my team has answered that Calgary has situated itself as a non-dominant carrier in rolling out fiber network and was able to support critical city operations impacted by a major flooding event.

So that's something we have been looking at and learning from. Another example, that comes to mind internationally is Chattanooga, Tennessee which has a quite a, um,

sort of famed Internet provider as well from the municipality perspective and they were able to be responsive during the pandemic as well.

So they were able to, you know, rather than, I know that the private companies here in Canada did many things to support Canadians, but through a municipal led fiber network, they were able to allow students extra access.

They were able to suspend cancellations, you know, etc., based on payment because of their, you know, because of their position in the market.

So, those are things we're thinking about as well from a broad perspective to answer that question. Sorry, I was just keeping an eye on the time.

We got enough time for about 1 or 2 more questions.

Before we go into the next steps. Sure. Yeah, absolutely.

And so another, there's a very fair comment saying, it's hard to see how we're doing it if we don't really understand what we're doing and that's definitely true. And something that we're trying to make clear through sessions like today's session.

There's another comment in the Q & As that speak to, it will be important to determine the general, the accepted standards to inform digital autonomy

and it gives examples for some standards, that will reasonably inform digital autonomy and so we've taken note of those as well. And we will definitely review them in more detail. So thank you very much for that comment.

And that was

I appreciate Hamish giving you that queue. I sometimes need that to stop talking. So I will, you know what, I'll share the screen again.

And just to give a reminder for everyone,

on our next steps, so, we've been plugging this a lot today. We're really counting on your participation on the online feedback form,

if you have more comments to give us,

we're,

we're,

of course,

going to take what you've said today to inform our work but if you have the time and are able to complete the online feedback form,

which you will be able to find at [Toronto.ca/connected community](https://toronto.ca/connectedcommunity),

um,

we would really appreciate it.

I also wanted to bring your attention to the June 29th, general government and licensing committee meeting. It's, a standing committee here at the city.

And so we have a report that should be public in the next few days, and the report is around the consultation, you know, about digital autonomy.

And so if you, um, this is another great place to, to make your voice heard.

So,

please,

um,

There'll be,

There'll be information on this as,

as soon as the agenda is public,

you'll be able to also sign up as a speaker,

or give your deputation by writing

to this committee on this issue.

And as we mentioned earlier, we're very excited about communicating with you. We're really excited about hearing from you through more discotechs.

So, maybe hopefully, we will be able to do more and more in the fall, as we develop policy to share with you and to get your input on.

So, these are planned to be virtual at this moment, but we'll definitely let you know if that changes, and I'm very excited about hearing from you, in whatever format, you know, that works for you.

So, again, our email address is [digitalfeedback@Toronto.ca](mailto:digitalfeedback@Toronto.ca), and we'll be posting information on

our web page as soon as we're able, [Toronto.ca/connectedcommunity](http://Toronto.ca/connectedcommunity), singular. And yeah, I just want to say, thank you again to everybody for participating and thank you to our colleagues

from the various divisions that supported us throughout this entire journey and going forward, and thanks to the team as well, you've done a great job to get

folks here and talking about this, this is my favorite part so,

Hamish, did I miss anything? Great!

Thank you very much to everybody for your attention and hopefully we'll see you again soon.

Thanks, thanks everybody. Have a good evening!