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Town of Oakville

Vision 2057 Update and 2023-2026 Strategic Business Plan

Global scan

April 19, 2023

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Global scan – future cities

Deloitte's subject matter experts provided input on relevant topics related to municipal service delivery, human centred design, and use of technology to support growing, diverse communities. A summary of leading global practices that Oakville may choose to consider is provided.

Digital User Experience

With a population of more than 650,000 people, the City of Boston handles millions of digital interactions each year, from finding information on City services to paying a parking ticket. What sets Boston's website and social media apart from other municipalities is the user experience approach used by the Digital Services Team, which is guided by the principles of 'acting as a helpful human, using language that is equal parts warm and official, organizing navigation from the user's perspective, and building an energizing environment'.[1] Boston's 311 user experience focused webpage demonstrates information provided through a user experience approach.

Meanwhile, the City of Toronto has developed a Customer Experience Transformation (CET) program designed to remove divisional silos, scale digital capabilities, standardize across-channel experience, and drive service equity and inclusion. Through the program the City provides convenient, multi-channel options and accessible customer experiences that include digital self-service, contact centers and in-person service hubs.

Beginning in 2019, the City developed a new customer experience vision and catalogued all 400+ core services. A new Customer Experience Transformation and Innovation (CXi) team has advanced the City's capabilities in service research and design and business processes engineering. This is accomplished through human-centered design, Lean process analysis and data insights to design better services.

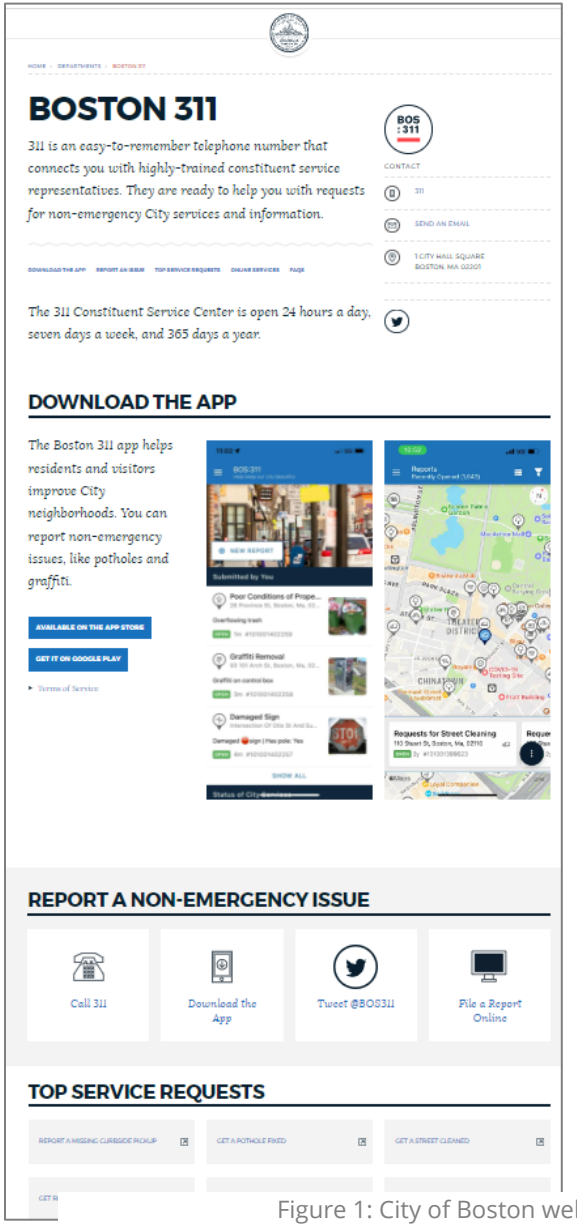


Figure 1: City of Boston website

[1] https://www.boston.gov/departments/digital-services-team

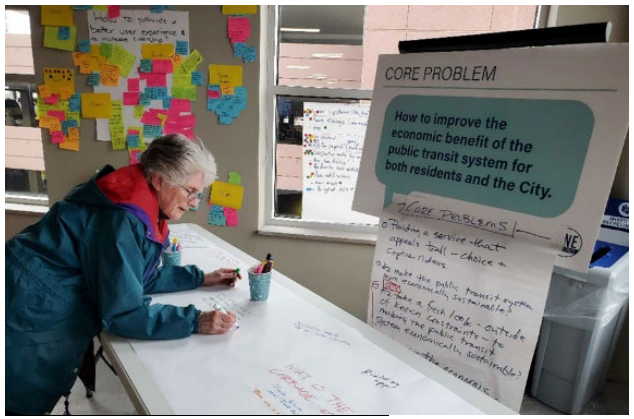
Human Centered Design

The City of Sioux Falls, South Dakota approached their public transportation problems by forming a team of innovative people from several departments.[2] Meeting every Friday for two hours over lunch, the 13 members were chosen for their high-energy approach to creative problem solving. The method they're using to tackle transportation in Sioux Falls is called "human-centered design." With coaching from a professional designer, they approach transportation without any assumptions about what's broken or how to fix it.

Before jumping to solutions, they begin by working to deeply understand the city's transportation problems in Sioux Falls, from the perspectives of the people affected by it. The team identified stakeholders such as bus riders, employers, and people who don't ride the bus, and split up to interview dozens of people from each stakeholder group. A few team members spent an afternoon riding city buses and interviewing passengers about their experiences. The experience of riding the bus themselves helped them better understand the needs of the people who ride it every day. When trying out riding the bus to work — a trip that usually takes 10 minutes by car — one manager found that it took him an hour on the bus.

Following their field research, the team recorded hundreds of takeaways both big and small on sticky notes. Looking for patterns in what they'd learned, they grouped key insights such as how long bus rides take, or the potential for public-private partnerships to fill service gaps. Along the way, they resisted jumping to solutions that came to mind — they needed to deeply understand the problem first.

Finally, the team began moving toward solutions through a process called "ideation." They invited four residents, including one who uses a wheelchair, to join them for a two-hour meeting to bounce ideas off each other and build on one another's thoughts. By the end of the session, they had generated and prioritized more than 50 ideas for improving transportation service. Recommendations included an on-demand service, which was piloted on Saturdays in 2020 and fully implemented to serve all bus stops in the city. Residents can book a ride through a phone app, website, or by telephone.



[2] https://www.siouxfalls.org/transit

Stream services around life event experiences

The life event approach puts the user at the heart of service integration and can significantly improve customer experience b offering the appropriate "basket" of services.

Instead of forcing individuals to track down different governmer departments in response to a life event such as starting a busine building a home, the departments collaborate to meet citizen ne proactively. This can mean anticipating citizens' needs, sharing information on the citizen's behalf, and guiding them through th likely next steps.[3] Life event service delivery can also link service across multiple departments, agencies, and levels of governmer

The life event approach combines three emerging design philosophies: human-centered design, Agile product developme and once-only contact (requiring the person contacting governm to provide information no more than once).

Implementing a life event approach to service delivery requires extensive user research through design tools such as ethnograp study, journey mapping, and persona development to understar citizens' needs.

Basket of services based on representative life events

Source: Deloitte analysis.

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[3] William D. Eggers, Jaimie Boyd, Joshua Knight, Simon Cooper, Pankaj Kamleshkumar Kishnani. How government can deliver streamlined life event experiences, Deloitte. July 12, 2022.

Deloitte Canada's national Digital Government leader Jaimie Boyd recommends implementing the life event approach gradually. After starting with one life event and creating a minimum viable service model that is rolled out and refined in response to feedback from end users in an iterative manner. More services can be added to the basket through additional sprints, and new baskets of service can be created as the process is mastered.

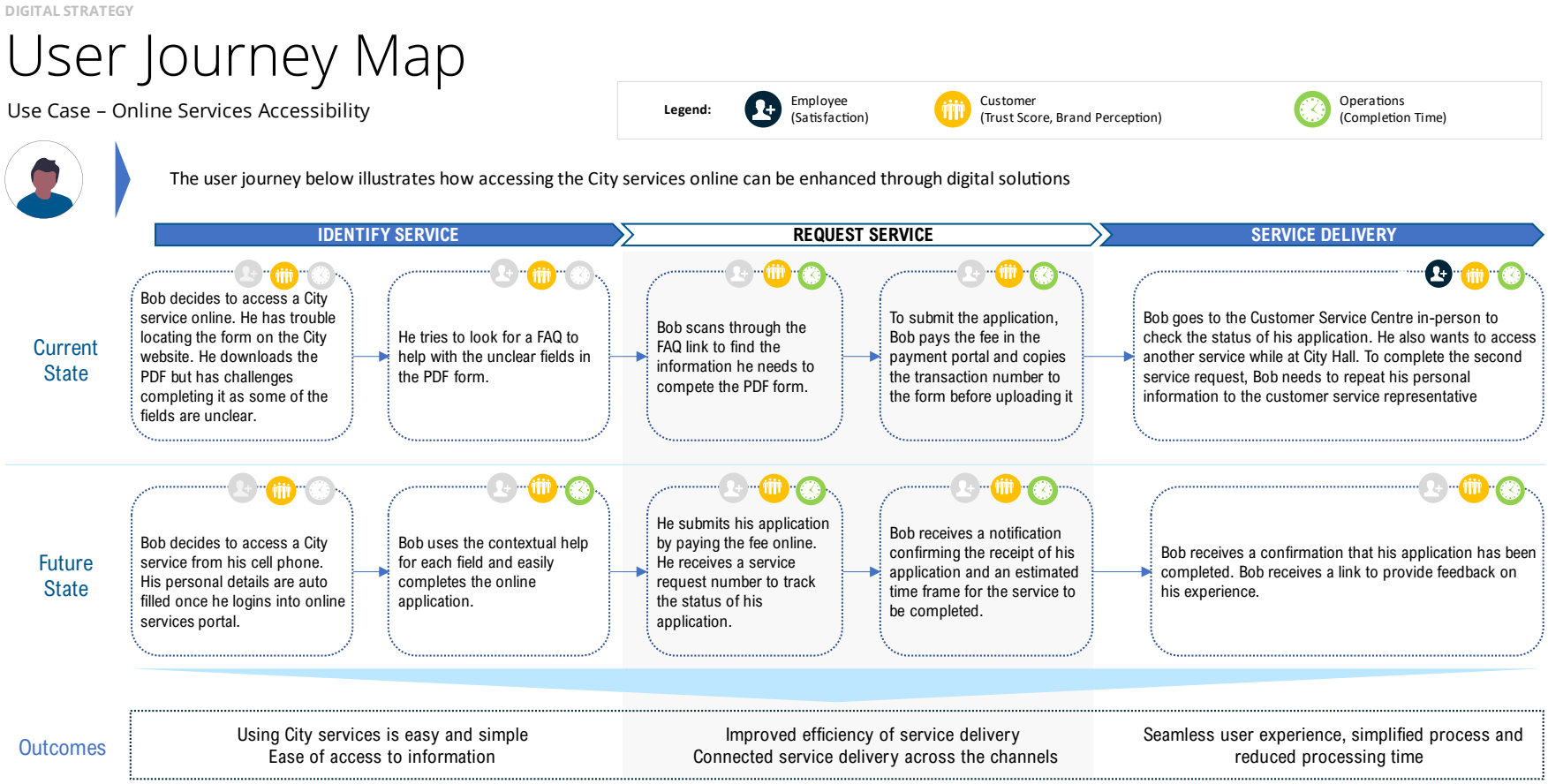

Image credit: Deloitte

Transit equity and improvement

Following the example of other North American cities, the City of Toronto is implementing priority bus lanes to deliver faster trip times and more reliable service along six heavily used corridors with proposals to implement priority bus-only lanes.

The first of these were completed on four routes in November 2020, reserving High Occupancy Vehicle lanes for public transit, accessible buses, and bicycles. The $4 million project included signage and a red surface treatment, with initial results showing a decrease in transit travel times of up to six minutes during peak morning periods and up to five minutes during afternoon peak periods. Reliability of all four routes improved by an average of 12 percent with one route improving by 19 percent.

Image credit: City of Toronto

Conversational AI

Conversational artificial intelligence (AI) tools deliver both quantitative and qualitative benefits to government call centers and 311 centers. The technology can reduce response times while increasing citizens' trust in government. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many local governments implemented conversational AI in their call centers to increase their ability to handle large volumes of calls with limited staff resources.[4]

For the City of San Jose, California, AI tools enabled the city to handle more calls for service, from about 165,000 tickets for service to about 215,000 annually. The technology enabled staff to answer residents' questions more efficiently while reducing language barriers citizens faced when requesting government services.

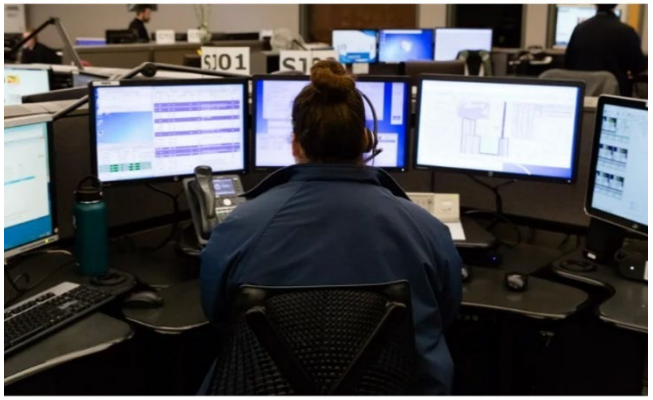

Image credit: City of San Jose

[4] https://statetechmagazine.com/article/2022/01/how-government-call-centers-can-use-conversational-ai-perfcon