17.

STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED

2025–2029 Digital Strategy

Date: April 22, 2025

To: Toronto Public Library Board

From: City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to request the Toronto Public Library Board's approval of the 2025-2029 Digital Strategy and 2025 Action Plan. It also provides an update on the 2024 Digital Strategy Action Plan and sets the future reporting process.

Modernization driven by data & technology continues to be a key enabler in Toronto Public Library's (TPL) strategic vision. To ensure staff and customers are provided with the right combination of technologies and supports to meet their evolving needs, an updated Digital Strategy is required. TPL's Digital Strategy defines a shared vision, course of action, and required investments to enable the priorities set out in TPL's Strategic Plan.

The 2025-2029 Digital Strategy will build upon the Library's previous journey of optimization to enable deeper transformation, delivering exceptional digital value and experiences by achieving the following goals:

- TPL will have a seamless, reliable, and secure modernized digital experience available both online and in-branch;
- there will be consistent, personalized experiences across and between service touchpoints, driving customer satisfaction and anticipating changing expectations;
- TPL will have a digitally enabled workplace where staff are collaborative, connected, and responsive, feeling empowered, confident, and competent working in a digital environment;
- data will be accessible and available to everyone, with information that is meaningful and actionable;
- TPL will have a secure, resilient, integrated, scalable, and stable technology environment that can enable the Library's current and future priorities.

Over the next five years, the Digital Strategy will guide TPL's digital transformation journey to optimize the Library's data and technology environment and deliver innovative digital services for staff and customers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. approve TPL's 2025-2029 Digital Strategy as described in Attachment 1;
2. receive for information TPL's Digital Strategy 2025 Action Plan as described in Attachment 2; and
3. direct staff to provide an annual update on the progress of the Digital Strategy action plans.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The 2025-2029 Digital Strategy, including the 2025 Action Plan, does not result in any incremental financial impacts over what is already included in TPL's approved 2025 operating budget, approved TPL 2025 capital budget, and 2026-2034 capital plan. The capital budget funds three multi-year programs that contribute to the strategic plan execution roadmap, technology replacement strategy and digital strategy with 10-year funding.

Future actions that may be identified for implementation in future years to support the Digital Strategy will be included, as required, in future budget submissions.

The Director, Finance & CFO has reviewed this Financial Impact Statement and agrees with it.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

TPL's 2025-2029 Strategic Plan includes multiple objectives which are enabled through Microsoft licensing and services. The strategic objectives of '*Equip staff with the skills to support development of digital literacy*' and '*Equip staff to champion and promote library services*' focus on ensuring TPL staff are equipped with the necessary tools and technologies to deliver exceptional customer service.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

TPL's Strategic Plan has the City's equity lens embedded in it. This lens supports the understanding and addressing of barriers to TPL services by equity-deserving groups and vulnerable populations in the City of Toronto to advance equitable outcomes for all. TPL's Digital Strategy broadens access and drives inclusion for all by:

- providing digital access online and in accessible & inclusive public spaces;
- increasing easy access to technology and digital literacy; and
- facilitating access to information and information literacy.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on June 24, 2024, the Library Board received for information the 2020-2024 Digital Strategy – Annual Report 2024.

At its meeting on May 23, 2023, the Library Board received for information the 2020-2024 Digital Strategy - Update.

At its meeting on May 24, 2022, the Library Board received for information the 2020-2024 Digital Strategy - Update.

At its meeting on January 25, 2021, the Library Board considered the Digital Strategy 2020-2024 report and approved TPL's Digital Strategy. The goals for Priority 5 of the Digital Strategy, Adaptive Technology Foundation, include '*improving access to technology for staff and customers'* and *'adopting a modern security approach to improve cybersecurity and TPL's overall security position'*.

COMMENTS

Building on the foundation established through the 2020-2024 Digital Strategy, which focused on optimization and setting the stage for transformation, the 2025-2029 Digital Strategy represents the next phase in TPL's digital journey, driving a true transformation of service delivery, customer experience, and internal operations.

The development of the updated Digital Strategy was informed by:

- outcomes and lessons learned from the 2020-2024 Digital Strategy implementation;
- evolving customer and staff needs and expectations;
- emerging technologies and digital trends in library services;
- industry best practices and benchmarking;
- alignment with TPL's Strategic Plan Priorities and Objectives; and
- an improved cybersecurity detection and response posture

The 2025-2029 Digital Strategy moves TPL forward from a previous focus on optimization to a more transformative approach, enabling innovation and growth across all aspects of our services.

TPL's 2025-2029 Digital Strategy

To enable an innovative, efficient library system to better inform, engage and connect Toronto and its residents, and to build success, resilience and well-being for the City and its communities, the 2025-2029 Digital Strategy is focused on achieving the following:

- *ambition* - to deliver exceptional digital value and experiences through transformative technologies;

- *commitment* - to provide staff and customers with the right combination of technologies, supports and digital services; and

- *approach* - to create a modern, connected and sustainable data and technology environment that drives transformation and innovation.

To achieve this, TPL's Digital Strategy focuses on five priority areas, with updated goals, workstreams, and key activities:

1. Digital Services and Spaces

Goal: Seamless, reliable, secure and modernized digital experience available online and in-branch.

Workstreams:

- Enhance Digital Platform
- Modernize Services
- Enable Skill Development & Innovation

Key activities:

- Launch new TPL.ca & App to deliver digital services to customers
- Deploy improved online renewal and validation
- Implement technology to automate and streamline logistics for materials management
- Support implementation of Digital Literacy and Technology Access Strategy
- Enhance digital offerings to complement physical collections and spaces
- Deploy innovative technologies that create immersive experiences in branches

2. Unified Customer Experience

Goal: Consistent personalized experience across and between touchpoints driving customer satisfaction.

Workstreams:
- Enhance Digital Customer Experience
- Enable Awareness & Engagement
- Increase Access & Discoverability

Key activities:
- Improve access and discoverability for customer services and products
- Support customers who seek a wholly digital connection with the Library
- Implement channel modernization and service improvements
- Create a plan to identify and deliver improvements to Digital Experience Platform (DXP)
- Refresh and enhance customer self-service technology
- Develop personalization capabilities to deliver targeted recommendations and services

3. Connected Workplace

Goal: Staff are collaborative, connected and responsive, feeling empowered, confident and competent working in a digital environment.

Workstreams:
- Modernize Technology & Platform
- Optimize Workplace Tools
- Enhance Workplace Collaboration

Key activities:
- Implement Enterprise Application Modernization (e.g., Finance, Human Resources, Incident Management)
- Enhance staff technology, connectivity and wifi
- Deploy improved staff communication, awareness and engagement tools
- Enhance service delivery by leveraging AI integration
- Deliver staff training and digital enablement programs
- Streamline workflows through process optimization and automation

4. Data-informed Decisions

Goal: Accessible, available data - meaningful and actionable by everyone.

Workstreams:
- Optimize Data & Analytics Foundation
- Activate Modern Data & Analytics
- Enable Advanced Analytics Delivery

Key activities:
- Develop and execute data literacy training for staff
- Deliver data analysis expertise as service
- Develop comprehensive data governance framework
- Enable self-service reporting and insights generation
- Implement wholistic data collection to deliver targeted customer engagement
- Leverage advanced analytics to predict service needs and optimize resource allocation

5. Technology Foundation

Goal: Secure, resilient, integrated, scalable, and stable technology to enable current and future priorities.

Workstreams:
- Streamline Connectivity & Infrastructure
- Enable IT Security Advancement
- Optimize Operational Efficiency

Key activities:
- Focus on improved wired and wireless connectivity, capacity and resiliency
- Implement materials management digital solutions
- Enhance IT Service Management (ITSM)
- Strengthen disaster recovery and service availability
- Improve cyber security response management
- Deliver digital enablement, training and upskilling programs

Transformation Journey

The Digital Strategy 2025-2029 builds on the foundation established in the previous strategy period and represents a journey of transformation that will unfold over the course of the strategic plan:

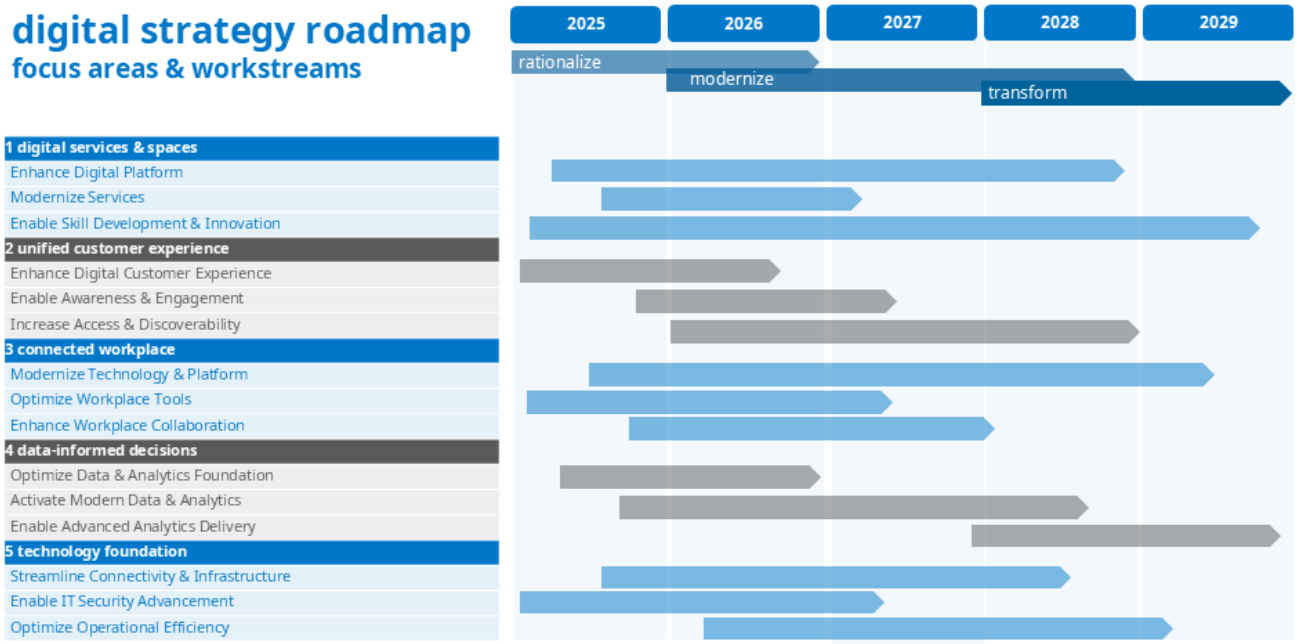
- **Phase 1: Leveraging Optimized Foundation** (2025-2026) utilizes the strengthened digital foundation to begin implementing transformative services and technologies.

- **Phase 2: Accelerating Transformation** (2026-2028) scales successful digital initiatives and introduces more advanced technologies and capabilities.

- **Phase 3: Achieving Digital Leadership** (2028-2029) positions TPL as a leader in digital library services, with mature digital capabilities that continually evolve to meet changing needs.

Guiding principles have been developed to ensure that throughout this journey, there is a consistent approach to the execution and decision-making of the Digital Strategy.

The roadmap for the Digital Strategy identifies key priority areas and workstreams planned over the next five years.



See Attachment 1: Digital Strategy 2025-2029 for additional detail on priority areas and workstreams.

Measuring TPL's Digital Progress

The effectiveness of TPL's 2025-2029 Digital Strategy will be evaluated through a comprehensive set of performance metrics integrated within TPL's Enterprise Balanced Scorecard framework. Through quarterly and annual reviews, these metrics will be continuously refined to ensure they accurately capture both incremental improvements and transformative outcomes across all digital initiatives.

Implementation of this forward-facing Digital Strategy positions TPL to deliver exceptional digital experiences that meet the evolving expectations of both the community and staff. By building upon the technological infrastructure established during the previous strategic cycle, TPL is now ready to accelerate its digital transformation. This Digital Strategy serves as a key enabler for the priorities outlined in TPL's Strategic Plan and will fundamentally transform how the Library delivers services, engages with customers, and empowers the workforce in an increasingly digital landscape.

TPL's Digital Strategy Action Plans

Going forward, TPL will develop and present a comprehensive annual action plan detailing specific initiatives that align with and advance the Digital Strategy roadmap.

2025 Action Plan

The 2025 Action Plan has been developed in response to the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan and Digital Strategy. Key initiatives are identified to advance the identified workstreams with highlights including:

Priority Area	Example Initiatives	Description
1 digital services & spaces		
Enhance Digital Platform	Launch new TPL.ca and App	Launch new online discovery layer and web site experience.
Modernize Services	Design and Deploy Online Renewal and Validation	Improve customer experience for eligible members during their first-time registration.
Enable Skill Development & Innovation	AI Upskilling	Selecting, licensing and installing a range of leading, multi-platform generative AI software and tools.
2 unified customer experience		
Enhance Digital Customer Experience	Consistent personalized experience across touchpoints	Review process and technology for customer communications and improvements.
	Identify and deliver improvements to DXP	Post launch of the new Digital Experience Platform, identify and execute on improvements.
	Online membership & customer registration	Develop a modular solution for the online membership registration, ensuring reusability, scalability, and easy integration of future enhancements.
3 connected workplace		

Modernize Technology & Platform	Staff technology, connectivity and wifi enhancements	Complete staff technology refresh with enhanced deployment automation. Improve connectivity bandwidth, availability and resiliency.
Optimize Workplace Tools	Enterprise Application Modernization	Deliver Enterprise Application feature enhancements to support operational efficiency.
	Enhance service delivery by leveraging AI integration	Assess and validate opportunities for introduction of AI tools that deliver operational value.
Enhance Workplace Collaboration	Staff training and digital enablement	Support staff technology enablement with training and change management
	Improved staff communication, awareness and engagement tools	Increase staff awareness, collaboration and engagement through adoption of modern applications.
4 data-informed decisions		
Optimize Data & Analytics Foundation	Data Management Platform Optimization	Optimize platform for data asset management, business intelligence and analytics.
	Tracking Branch Hours	Operationalize branch hours tracking to support enterprise balanced scorecard measurement.
	Data Quality Optimization	Improve processes and reassess data quality solution based on program definition and make required changes.
	Data Governance Roadmap & Implementation	Define roadmap for data governance and implement operationalization.
	Business Intelligence & Reports Review	Conduct business intelligence and reports review, rationalize and enhance as required.
5 technology foundation		
Streamline Connectivity & Infrastructure	Improved connectivity (Wi-Fi, UCaaS, standardization)	Complete foundational connectivity enhancements to achieve capacity, resiliency and availability.
	Computing devices optimization	Implement personas and improvement changes.
Enable IT Security Advancement	Mature cybersecurity controls, processes, tools and measures	Implement the program to increase IT security posture.

Optimize Operational Efficiency	Deliver enhanced Digital Experience Platform	Optimize digital experience platform architecture, establishing operational efficiencies to expand online capabilities.

See Attachment 2: Digital Strategy 2025 Action Plan for additional details on timelines.

CONCLUSION

The 2025-2029 Digital Strategy represents the next phase in TPL's digital transformation journey. Building on the established foundation, this digital strategy positions TPL to deliver exceptional digital experiences that meet the evolving expectations of the Library's diverse customers and staff alike. Through the five priority areas – Digital Services and Spaces, Unified Customer Experience, Connected Workplace, Data-informed Decisions, and Technology Foundation – TPL will create a modern, connected and sustainable data and technology environment that enables innovation and improved service delivery.

The detailed 2025 Action Plan provides a clear roadmap for immediate implementation. Annual updates will ensure continued alignment with TPL's broader strategic vision. By investing in these digital capabilities, TPL will enhance accessibility, improve operational efficiency, and continue fulfilling its mission of delivering equitable public access to information and digital literacy across Toronto's communities.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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Vickery Bowles
City Librarian

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: 2025-2029 Digital Strategy: a journey of transformation
Attachment 2: Digital Strategy 2025 Action Plan

2025-2029 Digital Strategy
a journey of transformation

April 22, 2025

tpl toronto public library

our ambition	our commitment	our approach
To deliver **exceptional digital value & experiences**	To provide our staff and customers with **the right combination of technologies, supports and digital services**	To create a **modern, connected and sustainable** data and technology environment that drives transformation and innovation

1 digital services & spaces

workstreams

- Enhance Digital Platform
- Modernize Services
- Enable Skill Development & Innovation

example key initiatives

- Launch new TPL.ca & App to deliver digital services to customers
- Deploy improved online renewal and validation
- Technology to automate and streamline logistics for materials management
- Support implementation of Digital Literacy and Technology access Strategy

outcome

Seamless, reliable and secure modernized digital experience available online and in-branch

strategic objectives enabled

2.2 Create welcoming and collaborative spaces

2.4 Enhance staff capability to provide welcoming spaces

3.4 Equip staff with the skills to support development of digital literacy

4.4 Equip staff to champion and promote library services

2 unified customer experience

workstreams

- Enhance Digital Customer Experience
- Enable Awareness & Engagement
- Increase Access & Discoverability

example key initiatives

- Improve access and discoverability for customer services and products
- Support customers who seek a wholly digital connection with the library
- Channel modernization and service improvements
- Create plan to identify and deliver improvements to DXP
- Refresh and enhance customer self-service technology

outcome

Consistent personalized experience across and between touchpoints driving customer satisfaction

strategic objectives enabled

2.2 Create welcoming and collaborative spaces

4.1 Increase awareness and service use among current library users

4.2 Expand availability of library services in all neighbourhoods and online

4.3 Offer new and innovative ways to access collections to meet evolving community needs

3 connected workplace

workstreams

- Modernize Technology & Platform
- Optimize Workplace Tools
- Enhance Workplace Collaboration

example key initiatives

- Enterprise Application Modernization (e.g. Finance, Human Resources, Incident Management)
- Staff technology, connectivity and wifi enhancements
- Improved staff communication, awareness and engagement tools
- Enhance service delivery by leveraging AI integration
- Staff training and digital enablement

outcome

Staff are collaborative, connected and responsive, feeling empowered, confident and competent working in a digital environment

strategic objectives enabled

1.4 Enhance staff capability to foster civic engagement and social connections

2.4 Enhance staff capability to provide welcoming spaces

3.4 Equip staff with the skills to support development of digital literacy

4.4 Equip staff to champion and promote library services

4 data-informed decisions

workstreams

- Optimize Data & Analytics Foundation
- Activate Modern Data & Analytics
- Enable Advanced Analytics Delivery

example key initiatives

- Develop and execute data literacy training for staff
- Deliver data analysis expertise as service
- Develop data governance framework
- Enable self-service reporting and insights generation
- Wholistic data collection to deliver targeted customer engagement

outcome

Accessible, available data - meaningful and actionable by everyone

strategic objectives enabled

2.4 Enhance staff capability to provide welcoming spaces

3.4 Equip staff with the skills to support development of digital literacy

4.4 Equip staff to champion and promote library services

5 technology foundation

workstreams

- Streamline Connectivity & Infrastructure
- Enable IT Security Advancement
- Optimize Operational Efficiency

example key initiatives

- Focus on improved wired and wireless connectivity, capacity and resiliency
- Materials management digital solutions
- IT Service Management (ITSM) enhancements
- Disaster recovery and service availability
- Cyber security response management
- Digital enablement, training and upskilling

outcome

Secure, resilient, integrated, scalable, and stable technology to enable current and future priorities

strategic objectives enabled

2.2 Create welcoming and collaborative spaces

3.3 Bridge the digital divide with new and emerging technologies

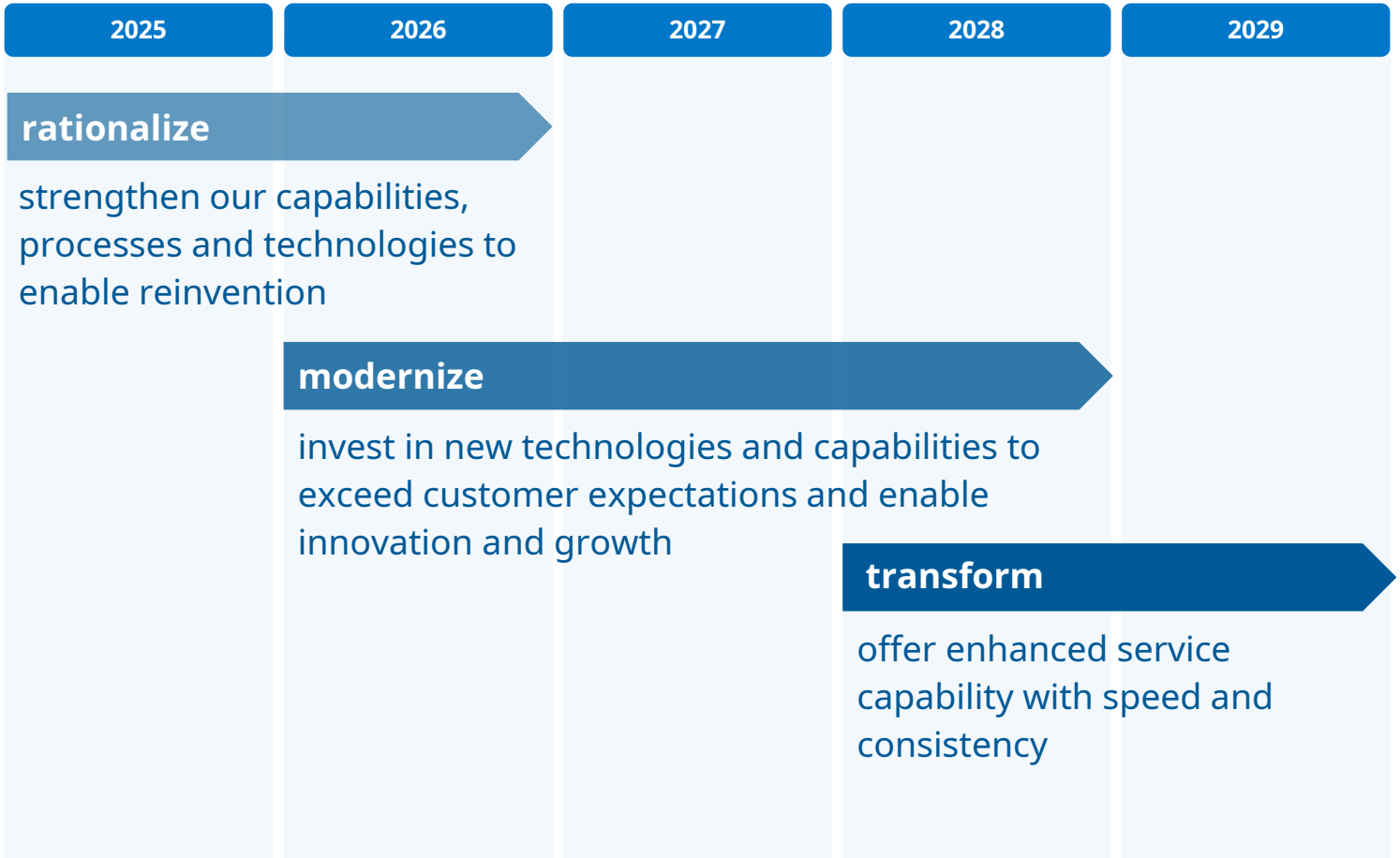
3.4 Equip staff with the skills to support development of digital literacy

4.4 Equip staff to champion and promote library services

our journey of transformation

guiding principles

- be **customer-centric**
- ensure **security & privacy**
- strive for **equity & inclusion**
- be **collaborative**
- manage **risk**
- build for **sustainability & scalability**
- encourage **innovation & creativity**



digital strategy roadmap
focus areas & workstreams

1 digital services & spaces
Enhance Digital Platform
Modernize Services
Enable Skill Development & Innovation
2 unified customer experience
Enhance Digital Customer Experience
Enable Awareness & Engagement
Increase Access & Discoverability
3 connected workplace
Modernize Technology & Platform
Optimize Workplace Tools
Enhance Workplace Collaboration
4 data-informed decisions
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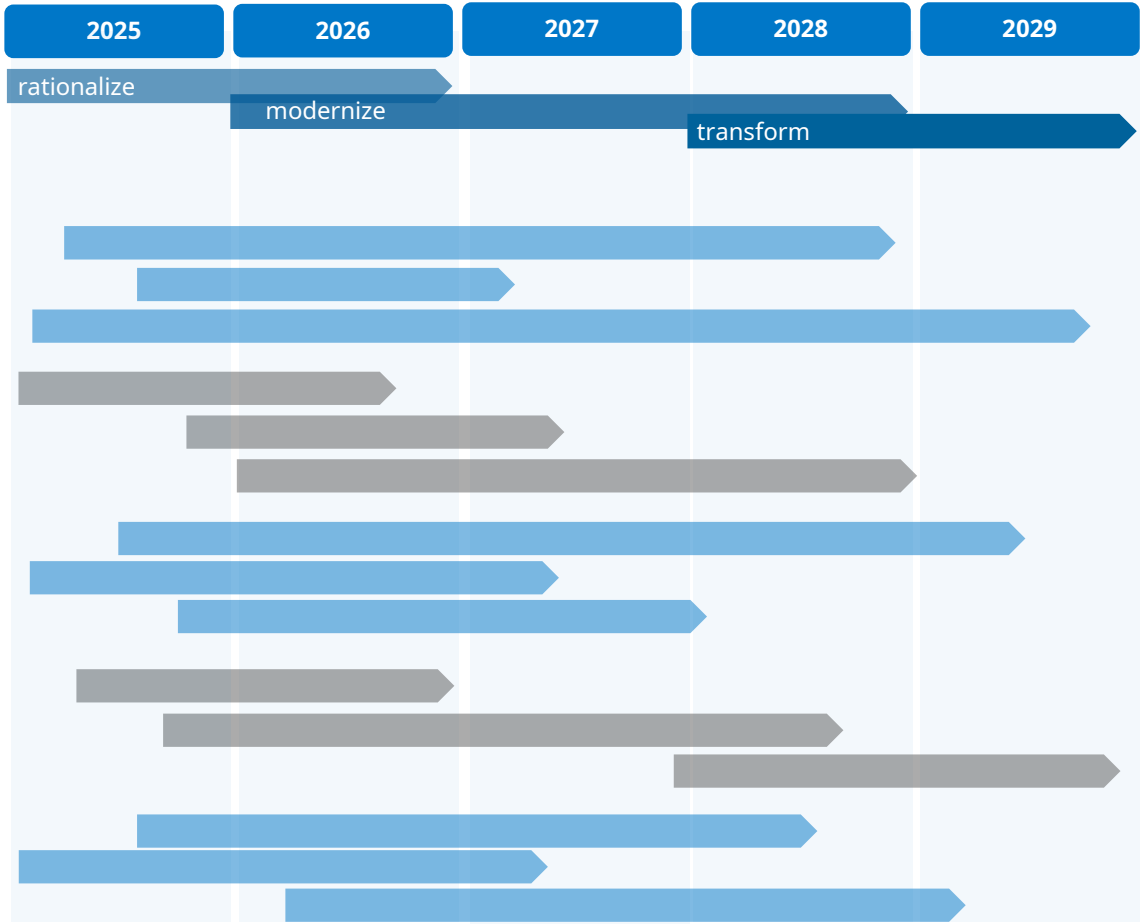
Activate Modern Data & Analytics
Enable Advanced Analytics Delivery
5 technology foundation
Streamline Connectivity & Infrastructure
Enable IT Security Advancement
Optimize Operational Efficiency



Digital Strategy 2025 Action Plan

April 22, 2025

tpl toronto public library

2025 digital strategy action plan
priority areas, workstreams & initiatives

1 digital services & spaces	
Enhance Digital Platform	Launch new TPL.ca and App
Modernize Services	Design and Deploy Online Renewal and Validation
Enable Skill Development & Innovation	AI Upskilling
2 unified customer experience	
Enhance Digital Customer Experience	Create plan to identify and deliver improvements to DXP
	Consistent personalized experience across touchpoints
	Channel modernization and service improvements
Enable Awareness & Engagement	Improve access and discoverability for customer services and products
Increase Access & Discoverability	Refresh and enhance customer self-service technology
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	Data Governance Roadmap & Implementation
Activate Modern Data & Analytics	Business Intelligence & Reports Review
5 technology foundation	
Streamline Connectivity & Infrastructure	Improved connectivity (Wi-Fi, UCaaS, standardization)
	Computing devices optimization
Enable IT Security Advancement	Mature cybersecurity controls, processes, tools and measures
Optimize Operational Efficiency	Deliver enhanced Digital Experience Platform