

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES VIA A THRIVING DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE



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Connecting essential city, county and regional government services within a healthy digital infrastructure is a priority as agencies look to transform their communities. In this Q&A, Tyler Technologies Chief Strategy Officer Bruce Graham discusses how local governments can implement solutions to break down geographic and agency barriers, share data more easily, connect processes and engage citizens.

How does Tyler define connected communities?

Connected communities bridge local government agencies, jurisdictions and the public across department and geographic boundaries through a thriving digital infrastructure. Just as a community needs a physical infrastructure to support roads, utilities and building development, it needs a digital infrastructure to support the essential services that help government operate efficiently.

Why would local government care about being connected?

Typically, each government department or agency uses separate applications, with self-contained processes and data, which leads to process isolation. Since systems don't talk to one another, the process — and data — stops at the "boundary" of the office and has to be picked up in a new process by the next department, usually with new data entry. When local government agencies can share information and integrate workflows across departmental, political and geographical boundaries, they gain the benefits of paperless processes and can serve citizens in ways they haven't even imagined.

Can you provide an example of a benefit of a connected community experience?

In Fulton County, Ga., which includes the city of Atlanta, officials are developing a clear picture of crime patterns. Authorities can now look at crime rates across various neighborhoods, see where individual crimes were committed and when someone is apprehended, and determine where the offender resides. This helps the city fight crime more effectively. To connect these dots, county officials integrated the flow of information among law enforcement, judicial and property tax systems.

Which kinds of jurisdictions will benefit most from connected communities?

Of course, any jurisdiction would appreciate seeing improved workflows and using data to gain

insight to better services; however, the connected communities concept is particularly helpful in larger metropolitan regions that are composed of smaller communities and counties. Often a resident may live in one community, commute to work in another, and attend events or shop in another — crossing jurisdictional boundaries multiple times. These neighboring communities need to share data often, so trying to coordinate sets of processes can be challenging.

What would your advice be to leaders who want to implement a connected communities vision?

We understand it's not always easy to look beyond an individual department and gain consensus with other agencies, let alone agencies in other jurisdictions. First, forward-looking leaders should define metrics that demonstrate the value of connected communities strategies. Use these metrics to build an evidence-based business case for modernizing technology.

Next, create a solid technology foundation. Update government applications with modern workflows and standardize on a single, integrated platform instead of piecing together standalone apps.

Finally, communicate with and gain consensus from the public sector staff who will be involved in executing this vision. Giving up old ways of doing things can be a challenge, but, in our experience, once they live with the benefits, they wonder how they ever got along the old way.

Putting the technology in place for broad coordination and process flow is not going to happen overnight, but we are excited about the direction as we work with jurisdictions to build their digital infrastructure. We see this as an 8- to 10-year vision, and we're methodically moving our products toward a common foundation across all Tyler applications to realize this vision.



For more information, visit www.tylertech.com/connectedcommunities.