# Should Your Town Office be Using AI?

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# AGENDA

- What is AI?

- Why Local Government Should Care

- Practical Use Cases

- Real Examples

- How to Get Started

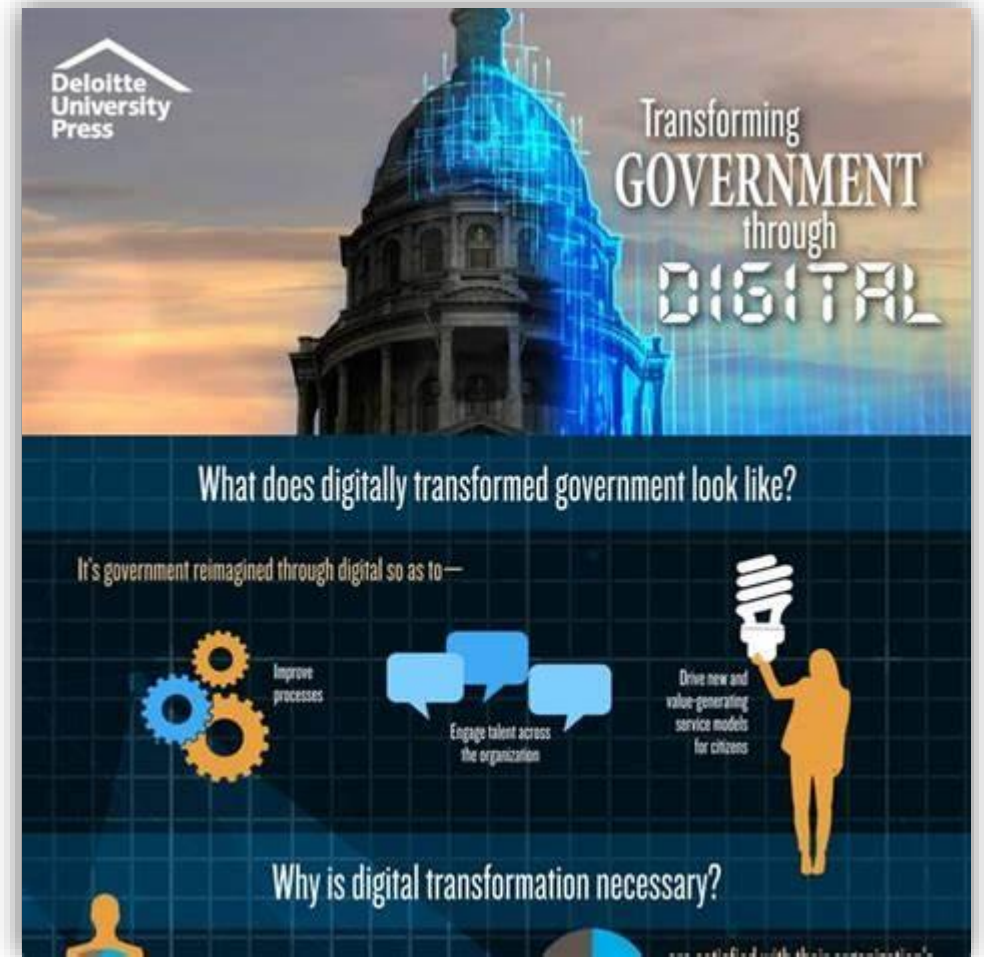- Risks & Guardrails

- Roadmap & Takeaways

- Q&A

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# Early AI

# What is AI – Plain English

❖ AI = Smart Computer Helper (think Alexa and Siri)

❖ **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** A field of computer science that aims to create machines capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, and language translation.

❖ Not to be confused with **Generative AI:** A branch of AI focused on generating new content, such as text, images, or music, by identifying patterns in training data.

❖ Already in daily life -  Maps, Spam Filters, Voice Assistance, GPS, Spell check, Auto correct.

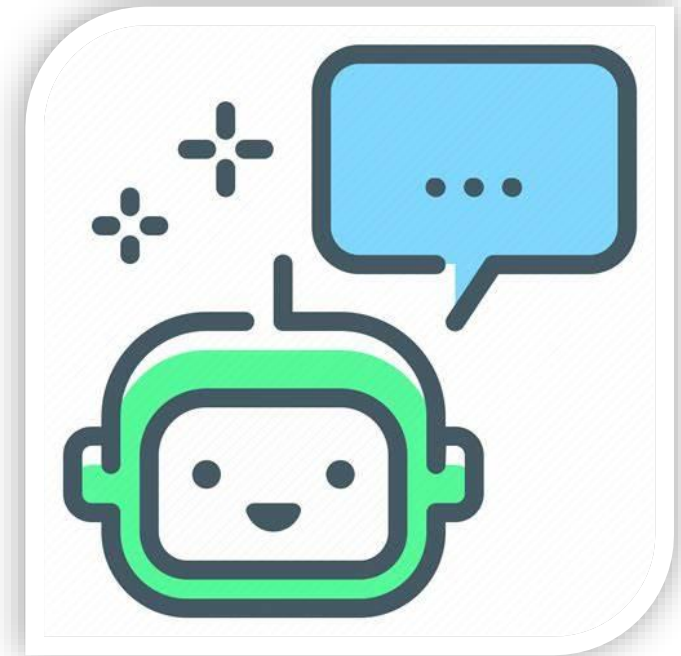❖ Local Governments can use it to save time, cut costs and improve service.

# Why Local Governments Should Care

❖ Residents expect fast digital service

❖ Staff and budgets are stretched

❖ AI helps automate tasks that are repetitive

❖ Keeps pace with modern expectations

❖ It's a tool to help staff, not replace them

# Everyday Use Cases

- ❖ **Citizen Help Chatbots** → Answer FAQs, AI-Assisted 311
- ❖ **Meeting Summaries & Translations**
- ❖ **Traffic & Safety** → Smart signals, crime forecasting
- ❖ **Budget & Finance** → Spot unusual expenses, forecast revenues and expenditures, identify trends
- ❖ **Public Works** → Predict potholes/water leaks
- ❖ **HR & Hiring** → Speed up screening, backgrounds, media searches, and onboarding
- ❖ **Building Safety** → Street-level imagery to map blight / abandoned structures, Proactive building-safety inspections (predictive analytics)

# Real Examples

- ❖ **Los Angeles, CA** – Smart Traffic System: AI optimizes signal timing across 4,500+ intersections.
- ❖ **New York City, NY** – Building Safety AI: Predictive models identify unsafe structures for inspection.
- ❖ **Boston, MA** – AI Citizen Chatbot: Virtual assistant answers service questions 24/7.
- ❖ **Austin, TX** – Predictive Road Maintenance: AI analyzes road images to detect early pothole risks.
- ❖ **Seattle, WA** – Energy Efficiency Analytics: AI identifies inefficiencies and supports sustainability.
- ❖ **Chicago, IL** – Health Inspection Prediction: AI forecasts likely restaurant violations.
- ❖ **GRASP Municipal Budget Chatbot (U.S. Pilot):** 78% accurate AI answering citizen budget questions.
- ❖ **Covington, KY** – Economic Development Chat Bot to answer local ED questions.

# Getting Started – No Expertise Needed

❖ Put a **policy** in place and make sure all your teams understand it.

❖ **Start small** with chatbots or transcription tools

❖ Use **AI built into** Microsoft/Google products

❖ Ask current **vendors** what AI tools they offer

❖ Partner with **universities or nonprofits**

❖ **Train** staff to use AI confidently (no coding needed)

❖ **Trust but verify**

# Guardrails and Risks



❖ Bias & Fairness → Keep human oversight

❖ Transparency → Explain AI use to residents

❖ Privacy → Protect sensitive information

❖ Public Trust → Start with safe, non-controversial pilots

❖ Trust but Verify

*"Guardrails don't slow progress — they make the journey safe."*

# Roadmap – Simple Steps

- ❖ **Try It** – Pilot with chatbot or meeting notes
- ❖ **Test It** – Measure time saved and satisfaction
- ❖ **Talk About It** – Share results with staff/residents
- ❖ **Expand** at your own pace – Add 1–2 new use cases a year
- ❖ **Govern It** – Set simple AI rules and policies

# Key Takeaways

❖ AI = tool, not replacement

❖ Already working in other cities

❖ No technical expertise required to begin

❖ Start small → Learn fast → Build trust

❖ Trust but verify

❖ "ChatGPT can make mistakes. Check important info."



Daily Times

WHAT ARE THE TAKE-AWAYS?

# Q&A

➤ What's one task in your Town that AI could save time on?

➤ Join at **menti.com** - Use code 5550 1326

# References

- **ICMA** Local Government AI Strategy Workbook

- "Using AI in Local Government: 10 Use Cases" **(Oracle)**

- "Practical AI Insights for Local Leaders," **Urban Institute**

- **NACo** "AI County Compass" toolkit National Association of Counties

- Local Government Association AI Case Study Bank **(UK)**

- **Govstack:** AI & Municipal Government Challenges & Best Practices

- AI Handbook for Local Government **(Michigan Municipal League)**

- **Bloomberg Cities -** strategies for spreading AI

- **GRASP:** Municipal Budget Chatbots research

- Transportation electrification & GeoAI case in **Austin, TX**

# Want to Dive Further into AI?

**The Alliance for Innovation can help! Become a member today to get access to these documents and so much more. Visit [Transformgov.org](http://Transformgov.org) to learn more.**

- ❏ AFI Task Force on Generative AI Guiding Document and Recommendations
- ❏ AFI Task Force Basic Training Slides
- ❏ AFI Task Force Data Governance Policy Template
- ❏ AFI Task Force Best Practices
- ❏ AFI Task Force Resource Guides
- ❏ AFI Task Force Roles at Risk Assessment Guide

*AFI is a member organization specializing in providing strategic foresight and innovation services for local governments looking to navigate the uncertain terrain of tomorrow.*

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# THANK YOU

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