

TORONTO LEADS AGAIN

The City the World Learns From

Build it here, prove it here, improve it here and share what works - a civic learning and evidence strategy.

Campaign Policy Proposal - Not a City of Toronto Publication



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People first. Families first. Machines serve. Democracy decides. Nature sets the constraint. Art gives the future meaning.

Contents

1. Why this matters
2. Executive Summary
3. Toronto Today and Inherited Work
4. Vision and Outcomes
5. Visualizing the Strategy
6. Strategic Priorities
7. Targets, Scenarios and Planning Assumptions
8. Implementation and Delivery
9. Accountability and Public Reporting
10. Sources and Notes

Why this matters

Leadership by evidence

Toronto should lead by showing its work: the baseline, design, cost, outcome, failure modes and conditions under which another city could replicate or reject an approach.

Failure is information

A proving city must publish failures as well as successes. Stopping a weak pilot early is evidence of competent government, not embarrassment.

Executive Summary

The City the World Learns From is Toronto's civic learning strategy. International leadership is treated as the output of competence: test promising ideas in real conditions, publish methods and results, improve them, and share what actually works.

The strategy separates civic learning from formal international relations, which are addressed in Report 14. This report focuses on demonstration projects, evaluation, standards, accessibility, university partnerships and the ability of Toronto firms, creators and institutions to export proven knowledge.

Failure is information when it is bounded, transparent and used to improve the next decision. The first term therefore creates a public evidence library and common evaluation discipline for designated pilots and major innovations.

Major commitments

- Create a Toronto Leads Again public evidence library for designated pilots and innovations.
- Publish methods, outcomes, costs, limitations and failures rather than only success stories.
- Build implementation fellowships with universities, colleges and peer cities.
- Share accessibility, service and city-building standards developed through proven work.
- Connect proven local suppliers and creators to export pathways.
- Hold an annual public review of what Toronto should scale, redesign or stop.

How this fits the governing program

Financial treatment: first-term actions in this report must reconcile to Report 03. Unsigned partner funding and unverified technology savings are not booked in the municipal base case.

How to read commitments and numbers

Status	Meaning
OFFICIAL BASELINE	Current public evidence or an inherited program.
ADOPTED CITY TARGET	A target already approved by the City; not a new campaign promise.
CAMPAIGN COMMITMENT	A first-term action proposed by the campaign, subject to lawful Council/budget authority.
CAMPAIGN TARGET	A measurable result the campaign proposes to pursue.
PLANNING ASSUMPTION / SCENARIO	A decision-support input, not a guarantee.
PARTNER-DEPENDENT OBJECTIVE	Requires another government, agency, utility, institution or private partner.
LONG-RANGE ASPIRATION	Part of the 25-year direction; future Councils retain democratic authority.

Key public baselines and planning anchors

Indicator	Value	Date / status	Use in this report
Jobs in Toronto	~1.624M	2025 Official survey baseline	Current economic scale.
Net new jobs	23,410	2025 Official survey result	One-year result; do not extrapolate mechanically.
TransformTO GHG target	65% below 1990	2030 Official target	Toronto's adopted net-zero target is 2040.
City AI registry	Planned Q3 2026	2026 Existing City initiative	Build on inherited governance, do not claim start from zero.

Toronto Today and Inherited Work

Current Conditions

This strategy begins from the programs, infrastructure and conditions Toronto already has. Existing work is identified as the inherited baseline; new campaign commitments are stated separately. Baseline facts that control the plan Baseline What the evidence says Existing platforms Toronto already operates public open-data, Campaign Policy Proposal - Not a City of Toronto Publication

climate, economic-development and culture strategies. An Atkinson administration would use those publication infrastructures rather than create a parallel foreign-policy bureaucracy. AI City AI governance is becoming more transparent through an Algorithmic Impact Assessment and planned registry. [AI2] Culture Culture Connects targets one million sq. ft. of new cultural space and 1,000 creative export/artist exchange projects over ten years. [CULT1] Screen Toronto's screen sector supports ~40,000 skilled workers and annual direct spend as high as \$2.6B.

Rail/energy Alto and Canada's National Electricity Strategy create national-scale infrastructure contexts in which Toronto can contribute city-level integration lessons. [MOB1][FEDGRID] Throughout this report, official baselines, campaign calculations, campaign proposals and partner-dependent decisions are identified separately.

Vision and Outcomes

Civic leadership is credible when Toronto can show its work and learn from failure.

- A City that learns faster than it repeats mistakes.
- Pilots that answer real public questions rather than demonstrate novelty.
- Public evidence that other cities and institutions can inspect and reuse.
- Toronto workers, firms and creators benefiting when locally proven methods travel.
- International reputation grounded in measurable civic performance.

Visualizing the Strategy

Selected campaign visuals from the earlier reference reports are retained here because they explain relationships that are harder to understand in prose alone. They are explanatory illustrations; the surrounding text and tables define commitments, costs, authority and status.

**Jamie
Atkinson**

Toronto Connected to the World.

Toronto can share knowledge, talent, and innovation with cities and communities across the globe.



Toronto connected to the world: civic learning should bring useful knowledge home and share proven methods outward.



The learning city turns evidence into decisions through interdisciplinary teams, public evaluation and institutional memory.

Strategic Priorities

Toronto should treat learning as an operating capability: measure what works, preserve institutional knowledge and share proven methods without hiding failures.

1. Toronto Leads Again Evidence Library

Toronto should preserve what it learns from pilots, major projects and service reforms in a form that residents, researchers and future administrations can inspect. The Evidence Library would publish methods, outcomes, limitations, costs and reusable tools for selected initiatives.

It would not publish personal or security-sensitive information. Its purpose is institutional memory: reduce repeated mistakes, make successful approaches easier to reuse and allow public claims of success to be checked against evidence.

2. Annual City the World Learns From report with methods/results/failures

An annual report would select a manageable number of Toronto experiments and reforms and explain what was tried, what happened, what failed, what changed and what should be scaled or stopped. Failure would be treated as information when it is bounded, transparent and used to improve decisions.

The publication would connect operational results to the public scorecards in the underlying strategy reports rather than invent a separate performance system.

3. Civic standards and accessibility exchange

Toronto can contribute to practical standards in areas where the City has real experience: accessibility, complete-journey design, public AI governance, resilient infrastructure, building retrofits and service measurement. Sharing standards helps other cities learn while exposing Toronto's own work to external scrutiny.

Participation would occur through appropriate standards bodies, professional networks and city-to-city exchanges, with clear attribution and public documentation.

4. International university/city implementation fellowships

Universities and cities solve different parts of the same urban problems. Implementation fellowships would bring students, researchers, practitioners and municipal staff together around defined Toronto challenges, with reciprocal learning from partner cities.

Fellowships should produce usable outputs - evaluations, prototypes, design standards or datasets - and should be structured so residents benefit rather than serving as academic tourism.

5. Toronto OVO and creator exports

Toronto's global influence is not limited to government policy. Toronto OVO and related creator initiatives can help local artists and producers present Toronto-made work internationally while preserving creator ownership and cultural authorship.

Report 13 defines the cultural and production tools; this report focuses on how proven Toronto work can become part of the city's learning and reputation abroad.

6. Supplier/export pathways tied to proven local work

Companies that prove technologies, construction methods or service tools in Toronto should have clearer pathways to demonstrate that evidence to other markets. The City can document results, convene export partners and create transparent reference pathways without endorsing individual firms as guaranteed winners.

Trade agencies, partner cities and institutional networks can then help qualified Toronto suppliers compete elsewhere, linking civic innovation to jobs and exports.

7. Global Citizens Exchange for diaspora/newcomer/international expertise

Toronto's residents already contain deep knowledge of cities and countries around the world. A Global Citizens Exchange would create structured ways for diaspora communities, newcomers, international students and experienced professionals to contribute knowledge to civic projects and international partnerships.

Participation would be voluntary and issue-specific. The program would value lived and professional expertise without reducing communities to symbolic representation.

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Targets, Scenarios and Planning Assumptions

Planning Assumptions and Key Calculations

Show the arithmetic and its limitations so optimistic assumptions cannot quietly become promises. Calculation register Calculation / model Method / interpretation Evidence leverage If each of 10 major proving programs publishes one method + one annual result + one failure/learning record, Toronto produces 30 reusable evidence objects per year without creating a giant new institution. Export discipline \$15M operating / \$20M capital first-term specialist lens is a bounded knowledge/exchange envelope. Large rail, grid or commercial export investments remain in their underlying portfolios/balance sheets. Benchmark rule A benchmark must compare the same outcome and denominator (per resident, per trip, per dwelling, per dollar, per tonne, etc.). Ranking claims without comparable definitions should be excluded. Planning arithmetic is used as decision support. Where official forecasts or project-specific engineering supersede a campaign screening calculation, the official or engineered value governs.

Implementation and Delivery

First 100 Days

The opening 100 days identify which City pilots and reforms will enter the first Evidence Library, set publication standards and establish partnerships for independent learning and exchange.

- Define the evidence-library publication standard for designated pilots.
- Select the first cross-portfolio projects for common evaluation.
- Create a university and college implementation-fellowship framework.
- Identify civic standards that Toronto can document and share openly.
- Publish a schedule for the first annual City the World Learns From review.

2027-2030 First-Term Action Plan

During 2027-2030, Toronto institutionalizes learning by publishing results, improving standards, hosting reciprocal fellowships and helping proven local methods and suppliers reach other cities.

Phase	Action	Lead / authority	Resident result
Document	Public evidence library	City Manager / program owners	Methods and results remain accessible after projects end.
Evaluate	Common pilot and innovation framework	Program owners / independent partners	Scale and stop decisions use comparable evidence.
Learn	Implementation fellowships and peer exchanges	City / universities / peer cities	Staff and students convert lessons into practice.
Share	Civic standards and accessibility knowledge	City / standards partners	Proven practices travel without overstating certainty.
Export	Supplier and creator pathways tied to proven work	Economic Development / Toronto Creates	Local capability gains market opportunities.

2031-2051 Long-Term Direction

Over time, Toronto should become known not for claiming perfection but for producing trustworthy evidence, improving in public and sharing methods that other cities can adapt.

- Make continuous evaluation part of Toronto's institutional culture rather than a special innovation program.
- Develop open standards and evidence packages that help other cities adapt Toronto's proven practices.
- Use international feedback to improve Toronto's own systems, not only promote them.

Risks and dependencies

Risk	Specific mitigation
Pilot culture produces endless experiments	Require a decision date: scale, redesign or stop.
Only success is published	Make limitations, cost variance and failure part of the evidence standard.
International activity becomes branding	Tie exchanges to specific projects, resident benefits and implementation outputs.
Evaluation lacks independence	Use external academic, professional or community review where material.

Review and renewal

The learning framework will itself be reviewed for usefulness: if publications or exchanges are not changing decisions or being reused, the format and portfolio should change.

Accountability and Public Reporting

Performance framework

Learning-system reporting will track published evaluations, reuse of proven methods, standards contributions, fellowships, external adoption and instances where evidence led Toronto to stop or redesign an initiative.

Metric	Baseline	Target / direction	Horizon	Responsible body	Reporting
Designated pilots with public evidence package	Establish baseline	100%	Ongoing	Program owners	Per pilot
Pilots reaching explicit scale/redesign/stop decision	Establish baseline	100% by decision date	Ongoing	Program owners	Per pilot
External institutions reusing Toronto methods/standards	Establish baseline	Increase	Long term	City / partners	Annual
Toronto firms/creators connected to export through proven work	Establish baseline	Increase	First term	Economic Development / Toronto Creates	Annual

Sources and Notes

Primary public sources are listed by organization and title. Campaign commitments, targets, scenarios and long-range aspirations are distinguished from adopted government policy throughout the report.

- [City of Toronto - Corporate Strategic Plan](#)
- [City of Toronto - Open Data](#)