



Sidewalks to Skyscrapers: Action Plan for Toronto's Economy 2025-2035

**Presentation to the
Economic and Community Development Committee
October 23, 2024**

Why – Rationale for a New Economic Development Plan for Toronto

- Toronto is Canada's principal economic engine and its global centre for commerce, creativity and capital - representing 20% of Canada's GDP and 53% of Ontario's GDP.
- It has been over a decade since [Collaborating for Competitiveness](#), the City of Toronto's plan to advance economic development, with a focus on job creation and economic growth.
- Despite many underlying strengths, Toronto's economy faces both local and global challenges in maintaining its economic position, including liveability, affordability, technology adoption, labour market disruption and increased global competition for talent and investment.
- Action is required now to both strengthen Toronto's significant competitive advantages and mitigate the impact of challenges, to ensure this city's economy remains prosperous and resilient for generations to come.

What – Action Plan for Toronto's Economy

- The Action Plan for Toronto's Economy sets an ambitious ten-year vision for Toronto's economy, guided by prosperity, sustainability and inclusion.
- The Action Plan sets a foundational priority of “Getting the Basics Right,” with a set of actions to address issues that pose the risk of undermining Toronto's livability and prosperity.
- Building on this foundation, the plan identifies three additional priority areas for action – Strong Main Streets, Quality Jobs and Global Competitiveness.
- A total of 29 leading actions are identified, including 10 to strengthen the foundation and 19 to advance the three priorities identified above. In total, the plan identified 73 actions proposed as necessary to strengthen Toronto's economy.
- Progress will be reported on an annual basis, and – to remain responsive to a changing economy – a new work plan for the second term (2030-2035) will be developed, informed by the progress of the 2025-2029 work plan and by the economic trends at the time.

How – Plan Development Process

Stakeholder Engagement

- Over 1,000 stakeholders engaged through:
 - 478 through sector-specific and small business sessions, Indigenous engagement and public survey.
 - 429 organizations and individuals engaged through EDC-led community stakeholder sessions.
 - 4 Council Advisory Bodies

Research & Data Analysis

- Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) through CivicLabTO on inclusive economic development.
- In-house and Canadian Urban Institute research on relevant macroeconomic data, economic trends, and best practices in other cities.
- External research on relevant topics – e.g. Downtown Recovery (School of Cities), Return to Office (ICE Committee).

Economic Advisory Panel

- 26 leaders spanning business, labour, academia and community agencies.
- Co-chairs:
 - Councillor Shelley Carroll
 - Zabeen Hirji

Vision – Action Plan for Toronto's Economy

Vision

A liveable, inclusive, and prosperous Toronto

Getting the Basics Right

By 2035, Toronto will have the best quality of life and high performing municipal services essential to providing a competitive environment to attract and retain business and new residents and provide economic opportunities for a diverse population.

Strong Main Streets

Toronto's unique main streets across the entire city will be animated and beautiful, acting as commercial, cultural and civic anchors for their neighborhoods.

Drivers, Actions & Success Indicators

Quality Jobs

Toronto will be an inclusive economy that adds quality jobs and leverages the diverse talent, networks, and expertise of all the people who live here.

Drivers, Actions & Success Indicators

Global Competitiveness

Toronto will be in the top 5 global centres for its specialized and globally competitive sectors.

Drivers, Actions & Success Indicators

5-year Workplan

Priorities and Leading Actions

Getting the Basics Right

- Achieve a new long-term intergovernmental funding deal for Toronto
- Incentivize a more diverse commercial building mix in downtown and other city centres
- Tackle congestion head on

Strong Main Streets

- Keep local businesses open and thriving
- Protect small businesses from rising costs
- Expand the number of businesses served by BIAs

Quality Jobs

- Build opportunity for Toronto's youth
- Build community wealth and local employment opportunities
- Create space for inclusive entrepreneurship

Global Competitiveness

- Grow Toronto's competitiveness in key anchor and high growth sectors
- Champion technology and innovation
- Optimize the use of Toronto's gateways

Key Action Plan Commitments

Small Business Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creation of new BIAs with focus on city neighbourhoods with inadequate representation• Doubling of public realm investments made through the BIAs
Employment Lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preserve all current employment lands and increase jobs within them by 5%• Drive the employment potential of major precinct developments such as the Golden Mile, Downsview, etc.
Congestion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve the mobility of people and goods in the city to support economic development• Mitigate the impacts of transit expansion
Sector Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote Toronto's rising culinary scene, with focus on supports for restaurants outside the downtown• Drive adoption of green technologies using City assets located across Toronto
Business Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protect small businesses from rising costs by instituting commercial rent control across Toronto• Increase uptake by 15% in the Small Business Property Tax Subclass
Workforce Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with Toronto's colleges and universities to develop academic programs that meet industry needs• Deliver targeted workforce development initiatives that support high growth sectors and create good jobs

Sample Success Indicators

Getting The Basics Right

- Continue increasing annual commercial property tax rate at 50% of the residential rate in any given year, until the provincial ratio is met.
- Achieve housing targets of the Housing Action Plan of 6,500 rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units, 41,000 affordable rental units and 17,500 rent-controlled units.
- Indigenous procurement policy co-developed by 2028.
- 100% of new buildings are designed and built to be near zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

Quality Jobs

- 10,000 more summer jobs for young people by 2026.
- City of Toronto partners and enables a minimum of three commercial land trusts by 2028.
- Boost the number of startups by women founders by 25% and double the amount of venture funding received by women-led startups by 2028.
- Develop 10 new industry-academia partnerships by 2030, directly aligning educational outcomes with job market needs.

Global Competitiveness

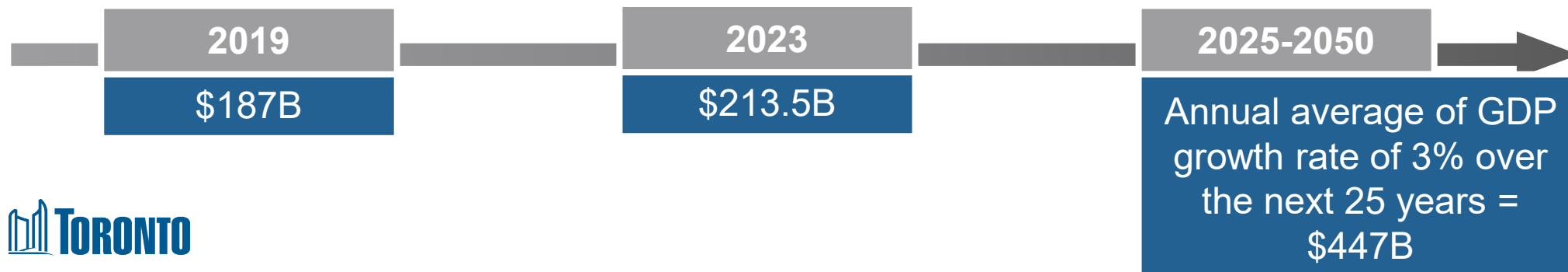
- Toronto ranks Top 5 nationally (Canada) in 2030 and Top 10 in North America in each sector identified by 2035.
- Launch an Office for the Tech and Innovation Sector (OTIS) in 2025.
- Preservation through 2035 of the current amount of land in designated Employment Areas.
- Three new financially-sustainable flagship events with international reach promoting key sectors by 2030.

Strong Main Streets

- Commercial rent control established by 2030.
- Ground-floor commercial replacement policy for main streets developed by 2027.
- Small Business Solutions Office established by 2028.
- Double public realm investments delivered by BIAs by 2030.

Anticipated Results – Toronto's GDP

Taking all these actions together, from addressing quality of life and supporting small businesses to accelerating Toronto's high-value sectors, Toronto will be on a path to double its GDP in 25 years, with an estimated 50% increase in GDP per capita. The city will also be on the path to having a more inclusive economy that works for all its residents.



Additional Indicators

Macroeconomic Indicators –
to be public through the City's Economic Dashboard



Business Activity

Business sentiment, development activity, business attraction, retention and expansion, and job creation among others



Sector Indicators

Sector-specific performance of Toronto's key and emerging sectors through sector employment and contribution to GDP



Inclusive Economic Development

Labour market inclusion, income and wealth distribution, economic security: rate of involuntary part-time work, gender unemployment rate, housing affordability index

Financial Impact

- The five-year work plan for *Sidewalks to Skylines* identifies 73 actions, with many actions to be implemented within existing divisional resources and/or are integrated into other City strategies.
- For 2025, this report is asking Council to approve \$5.570 million in new funding (including 6 FTEs) to support immediate work on 13 unfunded actions.
 - Of the \$5.570 million net, \$4.665 million will be directly invested into communities across Toronto, \$0.500 million will be used for a one-time competitiveness study and less than 7% will be directly invested in the public service to support staff resources.
 - Additional resources required to deliver upon this Action Plan will be proposed through future reporting and annual budget processes.



Thank You

Questions?