

Supplementary Report: 10-Year Circular Economy Road Map

Date: November 10, 2025

To: City Council

From: Executive Director, Environment, Climate and Forestry

Wards: All

SUMMARY

On October 29, 2025, the Infrastructure and Environment Committee adopted Item IE25.1 entitled "10-Year Circular Economy Road Map" (the Report) as amended and requested the Executive Director, Environment, Climate and Forestry, to submit a supplementary report on Item IE25.1 directly to the November 12, 13, and 14, 2025 meeting of City Council, addressing the recommendations made by the Circular Innovation Council through a deputation.

The Circular Innovation Council's recommendations for the 10-Year Circular Economy Road Map were as follows:

1. Strengthening the connectivity with other critical City plans and their objectives; (HousingTO, Affordability/Poverty Reduction Strategy, TransformTO Net Zero Strategy, Sidewalks to Skylines: A 10-Year Action Plan for Toronto's Economy, Resilience Strategy);
2. Include broader and more specific impact indicators and set targets for them in each action (environment, economic and social);
3. Broaden environmental measurements to include carbon emission reduction;
4. Review progress for the plan annually;
5. Assign or co-assign actions to the Divisions that should lead them; and
6. Expand these actions to the Agencies and Corporations that the City supports.

The purpose of this supplementary report is to address these recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Environment, Climate and Forestry recommends that:

1. City Council request that the City's Agencies and Corporations review the report of the Executive Director, Environment, Climate and Forestry and the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services, dated October 15, 2025,

titled "10-Year Circular Economy Road Map," including all attachments, along with City Council's directions, and adopt similar actions where possible.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no additional financial impacts resulting from the adoption of this supplementary report.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer have reviewed this supplementary report and agree with the information as presented in the Financial Impact Section.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on October 29, 2025, the Infrastructure and Environment Committee adopted Item IE25.1 entitled "10-Year Circular Economy Road Map" as amended and requested the Executive Director, Environment, Climate and Forestry to submit a supplementary report on Item IE25.1 directly to the November 12, 13, and 14, 2025 meeting of City Council addressing the recommendations of the Circular Innovation Council. These recommendations include strengthening the connectivity with other City plans and their objectives; including broader and more specific impact indicators and targets for each action; broadening the environmental measurements to include carbon emission reduction; reviewing progress for the Plan annually; assigning or co-assigning actions to Divisions; and expanding these actions to City Agencies and Corporations. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/report.do?meeting=2025.IE25&type=agenda>

COMMENTS

The City of Toronto (the City) has been working on its circular economy transition since Council set an aspirational goal in 2016 to work towards zero waste and to make Toronto the first municipality in the province of Ontario with a circular economy. Building on this work, the City has developed its first "Circular Economy Road Map" (the Road Map, which is [Attachment 1](#) to the report entitled "10-Year Circular Economy Road Map" dated October 15, 2025 ([the Report](#)) from the Executive Director, Environment, Climate and Forestry and General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services). It sets out a vision for Toronto's circular economy transition over the next 10 years through five Strategic Directions and 15 Actions to support waste reduction and sustainable consumption in Toronto, with a focus on addressing the wider consumption behaviours that generate waste.

The Road Map was informed by input from residents, Indigenous organizations and industry representatives to ensure it reflects Toronto's unique context and priorities, as well as learnings from peer cities that are implementing circular economy strategies. Fifteen City Divisions¹ were convened to provide oversight and interdisciplinary

¹ The 15 Co-Creating Divisions of the Circular Economy Road Map are: Environment, Climate and

perspectives on the Road Map, and to address the operational and community-wide implications of transitioning Toronto to a more circular economy.

In the sections that follow, this supplementary report addresses the Road Map's connection to City strategic plans and objectives, impact measurement, environmental measurement, reporting frequency, interdivisional collaboration on plan implementation and opportunities for collaboration with City Agencies and Corporations, in response to information requested by the Infrastructure and Environment Committee.

1. Connection to City strategic plans and objectives

The Road Map was developed in a manner that aligns with and supports the City's key objectives and strategies (as outlined in [Attachment 1](#)) to ensure that the City's circular initiatives complement and reinforce these priorities. The City's [Corporate Strategic Plan](#) sets out its highest priorities and creates a common understanding of the work the City will focus on to be successful. It names the circular economy as one of several mechanisms to support the strategic priority, "Tackle climate change and build resilience." The Road Map Actions contribute to various priorities in the Corporate Strategic Plan, including addressing climate change and investing in people and neighbourhoods, with details noted below:

- **Housing:** Circular economy initiatives have been recognized in various City strategies and policies, including the City's HousingTO: [2024-2025 Housing Progress Report](#). The City's Official Plan, through [Official Plan Amendment 583](#), includes updated policies related to reducing waste and achieving a circular economy, while the [Toronto Green Standards](#) includes specific requirements around waste and the circular economy. Road Map consultations revealed concerns about including actions that could potentially slow down housing and the development pipeline. As such, the Road Map Action to improve circularity in priority sectors (Action 2.1) includes establishing an industry forum for construction that will help the City identify the financial, regulatory and technical barriers needed to create an enabling environment for circularity, while maintaining progress in the housing sector.

Representatives of the construction sector shared via Road Map consultations how integrating circular principles into the planning, design and construction of the built environment – such as through adaptive reuse, retrofit, deconstruction and material salvage and reuse – reduces waste and maximizes resources. As such, the Road Map includes efforts to facilitate circular practices in planning, construction and infrastructure for the City (Action 3.2). These actions will be delivered in collaboration with relevant City Divisions, including Housing Secretariat, Housing Development Office, Development Review, Toronto Building and City Planning.

Forestry; Solid Waste Management Services; Accounting Services; City Planning; Corporate Real Estate Management; Economic Development and Culture; Engineering and Construction Services; Housing Secretariat; Indigenous Affairs Office; Parks and Recreation; Purchasing and Materials Management Division; Social Development; Toronto Building; Toronto Water; and Transportation Services.

- **Affordability and Poverty Reduction:** The [Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy](#) (2015-2035) is the City's long-term strategy to address immediate needs, create pathways to prosperity and drive systemic change for those living in poverty in the city. The Road Map seeks to align and contribute to this strategy through actions such as establishing circular opportunities for residents in every ward (Action 4.3) and enabling community-based circular jobs and skill building (Action 4.1). By implementing actions that encourage businesses to create durable, long-lasting products, and by providing residents with resources to help keep products like food, clothing and household items in circulation for longer through repair, reuse and food redistribution/rescue, the City is seeking to provide residents with a greater ability to avoid frequently replacing products and save more money long-term.

The City also has numerous plans related to affordability that reference circularity. For example, the [Black Food Sovereignty Plan](#) identifies food loss, waste and circular economy as a food policy lens that can support advancement towards Black Food Sovereignty. The [Jane Finch Community Development Plan 2024-2034](#) names creating and fostering a local circular economy that aims to repair or reuse items as an opportunity to pursue through a proposed resilience hub. Within the Road Map, numerous Sub-actions help advance this work, such as increasing consumer education campaigns that communicate the benefits of responsible consumption and how to reduce avoidable waste (Sub-action 1.1.2), as well as leveraging City assets to provide additional spaces for City-led and community-based circular programming (Sub-action 4.3.3).

- **Climate Action:** The actions in the Road Map will be embedded across Environment, Climate and Forestry's portfolio, which includes the [TransformTO Net Zero Strategy](#). The 2021 Net Zero Strategy includes targets and actions focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from activities taking place within Toronto's geographic boundary, also known as Scope 1 emissions; however, it is widely recognized that enabling actions to reduce emissions outside of Toronto's geographic boundary (Scope 3 emissions), such as those being advanced through the Road Map, will contribute to Toronto's targets and goals. By enabling the transition to a circular economy, all actions in the Road Map have the potential to contribute to the reduction of local and global emissions, directly or indirectly. Examples of Road Map actions that contribute to climate action include those that will improve the state of circularity across priority sectors (Action 2.1), facilitate circular practices in planning, construction and infrastructure for the City (Action 3.2) and instill circular principles in City policies, processes and services (Action 3.3).
- **Economic Development:** [Sidewalks to Skylines: A 10-Year Action Plan for Toronto's Economy \(2025-2035\)](#) (APTE), the Road Map and the [2025 Mayor's Economic Action Plan in Response to US Tariffs](#) work together to strengthen Toronto's economic resilience, competitiveness and transition toward low-carbon and resource-efficient growth. APTE Actions 10, 22, 25, and 58–59 commit Economic Development and Culture to drive the adoption of green technologies, grow anchor and emerging green sectors and align workforce programs with the skill needs of a net-zero economy. These actions are directly supported by the Road Map's Strategic Direction 2 (Accelerate the growth of circular businesses) and many of the actions and sub-actions under Strategic Direction 4 (Advance circular

opportunities in every neighbourhood). Collaboration between Environment, Climate and Forestry and Economic Development and Culture is also reflected in Sub-action 2.3.1 of the Road Map, which leverages City assets through the Green Market Acceleration Program to pilot and scale circular business innovation.

Complementary Road Map Actions (2.1, 2.2) focus on dismantling barriers and supporting forums for industry collaboration, while Action 4.1, enable community-based circular jobs and skill building, aligns workforce and post-secondary training with the transition to a circular economy. These Road Map directions and actions are also consistent with the Mayor's Economic Action Plan in Response to US Tariffs, particularly Immediate Actions 1, 6, 7 and 8, which promote local procurement, technology adoption, export diversification and inclusive supplier development. Together, these directions position circularity as an important component of Toronto's competitiveness strategy, supporting local business resilience, innovation and workforce readiness in the face of global trade and climate shifts.

- **Resilience:** [Toronto's Resilience Strategy](#) identifies the City's commitment to work towards a circular economy as an aligned action, recognizing that the sustainable use of resources at their fullest value can drive the local economy, increase social prosperity and have better environmental outcomes. Actions in the Road Map offer a framework for localizing material flows and supply chains, and connecting communities through actions like sharing, donation and redistribution. Circularity offers a pathway to greater urban resilience by increasing local supply chains and production activities, decoupling operations from the extraction of natural resources, increasing material security and reducing exposure to price volatility. This can protect communities from a range of shocks and stressors, whether they result from global trade uncertainty to extreme climate events that disrupt transportation infrastructure. City resilience actions, such as the Jane Finch Community Development Plan, are already incorporating circularity as opportunities for enhanced community resilience (see above).
- **Waste Management:** The City's [Long-term Waste Management Strategy](#) (Waste Strategy), approved by City Council in 2016, is currently being updated to reflect Toronto's current and future waste management needs for a growing population. The Waste Strategy prioritizes reduction and diversion activities to minimize the amount of waste requiring management by the City and to reduce the amount of residual waste going to the City's Green Lane Landfill. The Road Map addresses city-wide waste generation, including waste that is generated by non-City customers, and the enabling actions that the City can take to make consumption more sustainable in the community and in municipal operations.

2. Impact Measurement

The Road Map identifies two indicators for each of the five Strategic Directions (Table 1). These indicators were selected based on the availability of data and their ability to measure progress towards the implementation of the Road Map. They will be expanded through efforts in the first years of implementation to establish a measurement framework for the Road Map's indicators.

Table 1: Indicators identified to measure progress against the Road Map's Strategic Directions

Strategic Direction	Indicator
1. Invite everyone to participate in Toronto's transition to a circular economy.	1. Resident, industry and City staff awareness of the circular economy. 2. Resident participation in City circular economy programming.
2. Accelerate the growth of circular businesses in Toronto.	1. Number of businesses served by the City's circular economy programming. 2. Number of new businesses contributing to Toronto's circular economy ambition.
3. Demonstrate the benefits of circularity in City operations.	1. Amount of City procurement that incorporates circular economy principles. 2. Amount of circular construction and demolition waste recovered from City-owned assets.
4. Advance circular opportunities in every neighbourhood in Toronto.	1. Number of circular economy programs per ward. 2. Number of youth engaged through City-supported circular programs.
5. Collaborate with other levels of government to accelerate circularity.	1. Total investment in Toronto municipal projects and business innovation related to the circular economy across levels of government. 2. Achievements from collaboration with other levels of government.

Research on existing city-wide circular strategies indicates that Toronto's approach to metrics and data aligns with that of leading global cities. Desktop research and interviews with Canadian and international counterparts undertaken during the development of the Road Map revealed several consistent challenges that cities face when measuring circular economy progress. These include a lack of guidance on how to practically measure indicators using available data and within program budgets, data gaps that require the use of proxy indicators and assumptions, and time- and resource-intensive data requirements that require staff resources to be dedicated to reporting efforts rather than program implementation. Further, many actions in the Road Map focus on creating an enabling environment for circular practices to grow in Toronto (e.g., by establishing industry forums), which will have indirect impacts on social, environmental and economic outcomes that are challenging to measure.

For these reasons, staff have determined that it is premature to create metrics and targets for each action in the Road Map at this time, as many of the actions are yet to be scoped into discrete projects. To ensure transparency as data collection and targets are established, leading practice emphasizes reporting at the program level, focusing on the measurable outputs of municipal initiatives. Toronto will adopt this approach by tracking program scale and reach during early implementation, while progressively building the data foundation needed for outcome-level reporting.

Improving data quality depends heavily on private sector participation. Engagement throughout Road Map development determined that Toronto businesses are concerned about the financial burden associated with collecting this data and the associated implications for market competitiveness. Circular economy activities also transcend municipal boundaries. A comprehensive picture of Toronto's circular performance,

therefore, requires significant collaboration with other levels of government and neighbouring municipalities. The City actively participates in dialogues with other governments, including through the Government-to-Government Circular Economy Policy Incubator convened by Circular Economy Leadership Canada, which is seeking to develop a national-level indicator framework for circularity in Canada and identify the data needs and availability to effectively measure the impact of circularity at the local, provincial and national levels.

The City recognizes the importance of accountability and will work towards building out its measurement framework as implementation progresses. A key activity in the first years of implementation will focus on establishing a framework to measure progress against the Road Map's indicators.

3. Carbon Reduction

The City will take a strategic approach to community-wide impact measurement by leveraging existing reporting channels. One of the main objectives of the Road Map is to promote responsible consumption, thus reducing overall material consumption in Toronto by preserving the value of the products and materials through circular practices. Since consumption is inherently linked to consumption-based greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, working towards a circular economy can significantly contribute to the reduction of GHG emissions and help mitigate the effects of climate change as measured through the City's [Consumption-based Emissions Inventory](#) (CBEI). The City recognizes the importance of measuring the overall impact of circular economy initiatives. As such, the City will continue to use and improve its CBEI, and will use it to inform targets, policies and programs that can help shift Toronto towards more responsible and circular production and consumption of goods and services.

4. Reporting Frequency

The [Report](#) recommends providing progress updates to City Council on the implementation of the Road Map in 2029, following the initial three years of implementation, and subsequently in 2032 and 2036. It was determined that this schedule would allow Council to assess progress at regular intervals and ensure accountability over the ten-year implementation period, while also giving staff the time to make progress on Road Map actions. Given the multi-year nature of many Road Map actions, reports to Council may have limited value if presented on an annual basis.

Outside of stand-alone Council reporting, staff intend to leverage other avenues for providing more frequent public reporting and progress updates, including updates on a project or program basis where appropriate. Staff will explore how to enhance existing annual circular economy program reporting in the City's annual Environmental, Social and Governance Performance Report and the annual TransformTO Net Zero Progress and Accountability Report. Staff will also explore ways to leverage platforms like [City's Open Data Portal](#) and the City's website to broadly communicate progress on Toronto's circular economy transition.

Accountability is one of six guiding principles for this Road Map. The Road Map will result in the creation of various projects and programs across the City; as these projects and programs are designed and developed, the City will establish mechanisms for performance measurement and feedback to drive accountability, continuous improvement and transparent public reporting on circular initiatives and strategies.

5. Interdivisional Collaboration

Recognizing the need for cross-corporate policy and programmatic integration to realize Toronto's full circular potential, in 2021, the TransformTO Net Zero Strategy included an action to establish an inter-divisional governance framework for the Road Map. As a result, this Road Map is co-sponsored by Solid Waste Management Services and Environment, Climate and Forestry and co-created with 13 other Divisions, representing a whole-of-City approach to development of the Road Map.

These Divisions, plus two new Divisions (Development Review and Housing Development Office), are named in the 3-Year Circular Economy Road Map Implementation Plan ([Attachment 2](#)). Through implementation, other relevant Divisions within the City may also be engaged to support implementation. City Divisions that have been named in the Implementation Plan are assigned a role (Leading or Supporting) based on their mandate and ownership of necessary relationships, assets, policies, programs and services. Importantly, these Divisions have been assigned leadership responsibilities in developing Division-specific plans to incorporate circularity into operational activities (Sub-action 3.3.4), as well as actions related to reducing waste (Sub-action 3.2.1) or creating circular opportunities within their own projects or portfolios (Sub-actions 3.2.2, 3.2.3, 3.2.4). These Actions and Sub-actions demonstrate that City Divisions share responsibility for advancing the City's circular economy goals.

Environment, Climate and Forestry will lead the implementation of the Road Map as its owner and manager. It will lead or co-lead projects in collaboration with other Divisions, providing technical guidance and supporting the identification and implementation of city-wide circular initiatives.

6. Collaboration with City Agencies and Corporations

During implementation of the Road Map, the City plans to engage with the appropriate City Agencies and Corporations to socialize the Road Map, identify opportunities for alignment with their programs and request that they adopt similar actions where possible. The City recognizes the impact that City Agencies and Corporations can make on the circular economy transition.

Furthermore, City staff frequently work in close collaboration with Agencies and Corporations. This includes on circular economy initiatives, such as the recent collaboration with CreateTO on a deconstruction pilot project at 1113 Dundas Street West, which is noted in a case study included in the Road Map. Environment, Climate and Forestry will continue to discuss and explore opportunities for collaboration with CreateTO throughout implementation of the Road Map. Additionally, Environment, Climate and Forestry is exploring opportunities to collaborate with Waterfront Toronto

on assessing the feasibility of a reuse hub for construction materials (Action 2.1, Sub-action 2.1.4), which is noted as a priority initiative in [the Report](#).

City of Toronto Agencies and Corporations operate at arm's length under Local Boards of the City. Each has a different mandate, authorities and responsibilities to deliver services on behalf of the City. As such, it is recommended that City Council request Agencies and Corporations to review [the Report](#) and adopt the actions outlined in the Road Map where possible.

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